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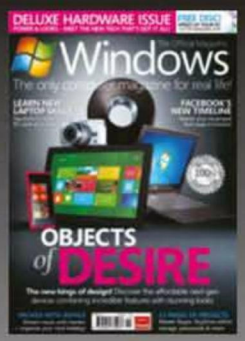
Welcome

Welcome to *Windows: The Official Magazine,* the only magazine in the world approved by Microsoft. This month, we're proud to present a special issue with a showcase of the finest deluxe hardware around.

It's certainly true to say that computer kit through the ages has been a bit on the drab side. Beige boxes, black boxes and not a whole lot in between! Well, the great news is that hardware design has finally caught up with the rest of the world and, in some cases, surpassed it. This issue we have a special feature on our handpicked Objects of Desire, showcasing the very finest products that marry great design with superb features and performance. The even better news is they don't have to cost the earth.

Enjoy the issue and, as always, if you have any comments or suggestions for future topics, please drop me an email at the address below, tweet us or stop by our Facebook page.

Adam Ifans Editor-in-Chief
adam.ifans@futurenet.com



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Our exclusive relationship with the company behind Windows, Windows Phone, Office and much more, gives us unrivalled access to the movers and shakers in the world of computing. From details on upcoming software and new versions of Windows, to insider tips and tricks for getting the most from Internet Explorer and your favourite websites, you can trust us to deliver everything you need to get more from your computer.

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Windows The Official Magazine

The only computer magazine for real life!

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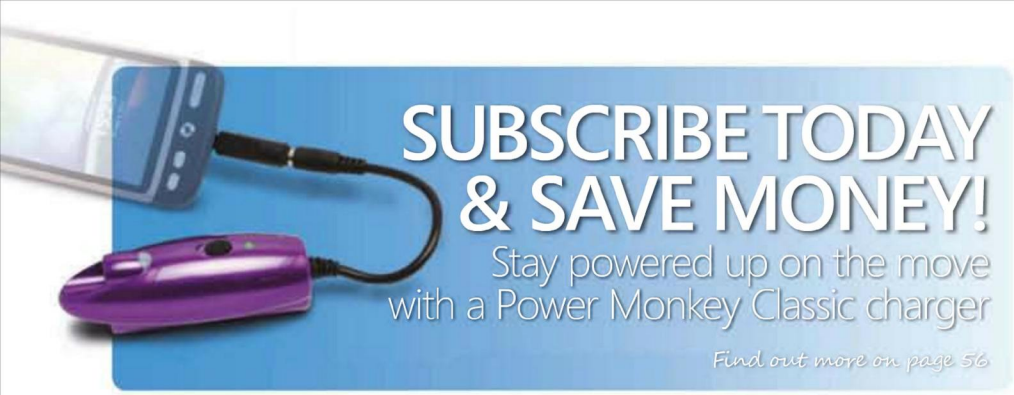

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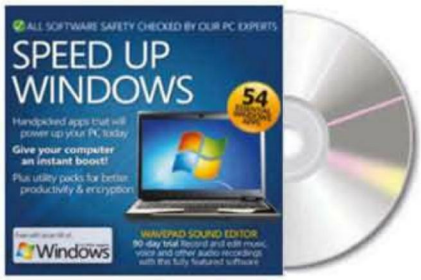

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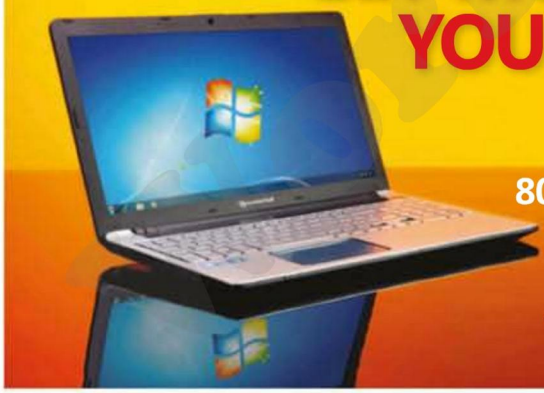

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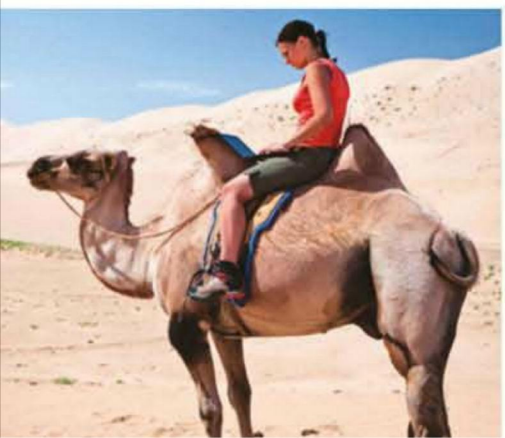

ON THE COVER

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OBJECTS *of* DESIRE

Windows hardware is now sexy and desirable, as well as powerful. Here's the pick of the crop

Technology in our homes and lives is about to change forever as we move closer to a utopian vision of technology. Against a backdrop of economic misery, the past few years have largely been about cost cutting, with quality taking a back seat in favour of bargain-basement gadgets. This year, desirability and performance are the buzz words, as manufacturers aim to capture our imaginations with devices we can be proud of.

Laptops have been one of the biggest offenders of penny-pinching, with the release of scores of generic, black, plastic machines. Now a new category of laptop called Ultrabooks has grabbed the headlines, backed by huge investment from Intel. These high quality, top performance portables offer style and speed in equal measure.

However, it's not just Ultrabooks that are driving a fantastic year for technology. Windows 8, Microsoft's new operating system, is set to make big waves, revolutionising tablet technology, while the themes of top design and quality will also be purveyed across the rest of tech. Read on for our pick of the hottest and best looking devices that will be sure to turn heads and win hearts in 2012.

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Microsoft Arc Touch Mouse

When sat alongside the finest cameras, monitors and Ultrabooks on the market, the humble mouse may not seem like the most inspirational piece of tech. However, if a mouse could be the sports car of peripherals the Microsoft Arc Touch Mouse would be a Mercedes convertible with all the optional extras included.

The ergonomic design fits to the hand like the proverbial glove and is adorned with white leather, which is both easy on the eye and soft to the touch. The Arc also has a few tricks up its sleeve. You don't have to drag this mouse across your desk, since it has a sensitive panel that enables you to use gesture controls to get more done. For easy storage and portability, the Arc can be flattened and when transformed into its new position it automatically turns off, which dramatically extends the battery life.

£50 www.microsoft.com/hardware

WorldMags.net

Asus Zenbook UX31

Embodying desirability and performance, the Asus Zenbook is the poster-boy of Ultrabooks. The 13-inch body is made from a solid piece of aluminium, meaning it's both light and strong. It weighs just 1.4kg and features a full-size backlit keyboard fitted into a design that leaves no wasted space, giving you the rare combination of comfort in a super-portable package.

The Zenbook can restart from sleep mode in just two seconds and there's also added technology that enables you to wirelessly connect to external monitors and TVs. The impressive five hours of battery life outstrips most traditional laptops and there's enough storage to take scores of photos, music and movies with you wherever you go. All of these benefits, plus great design, make this one of the best laptops money can buy.

£99 www.pcworld.co.uk

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Kinect for Windows

While many of the products here make the peripherals we're used to using look better than ever before, Microsoft Kinect for Windows is a whole new proposition. Kinect has been the motion-sensing tech behind hands-free Xbox gaming for over a year and now it's coming to Windows to enable you to control your PC with swipes and gestures. Currently, Kinect for Windows comes with limited programs through the supplied software, but in the future could power a host of super cool tech. Real-world applications already in testing include the ability to virtually try on clothes, learn first aid and even fly remote control helicopters using your hands. Kinect is also fully voice controlled and even recognises facial expressions.
£180 www.microsoft.com/en-us/kinectforwindows

Kinect laptops on the horizon

While Kinect is synonymous with the TV-top camera, it might not be long until we see it embedded in laptops, PCs and even in stores. The camera has already appeared in an Asus laptop prototype.

The benefits of Kinect in laptops are obvious, with gesture and voice control just the tip of the iceberg, while Microsoft's acquisition of Skype means that video chatting with Kinect could transform the way we communicate forever.

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Samsung Series 9 HDTV 3D Monitor

Whether you have a desktop PC, a 15-inch laptop or a super gaming rig, a good monitor will transform your experience. The Series 9 is one of the most complete displays available and, unlike other monitors, it looks just as good when turned off.

Just 11mm thick, the giant 27-inch panel is perfect for playing games or watching movies and iPlayer. Even if you only want to use it for work, 27 inches of real estate will make viewing files and writing emails a pleasure. Aside from being gargantuan, the Series 9 boasts a hi-def display, 3D technology and a full range of connections, which means you can connect games consoles, Blu-ray players and any other device, as well as laptops and computers.

£549 www.samsung.com

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Nokia Lumia 800

The big-screen 800 is a shining light among smartphones. The 3.7-inch screen fills the narrow body and uses ultra bright AMOLED technology reinforced by a Gorilla Glass coating, making it light, yet extremely tough. An 8MP camera produces excellent shots with deep colours and great lighting.

While the Lumia offers the best experience from any handset, it's Windows Phone that powers a really immersive experience. Each Live tile represents an app, but it's not just a static icon – the Pictures tile will be a slideshow of your images and your contacts folder takes information from Facebook and displays the photos of your friends when you call them.

£399 www.nokia.com

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Philips Fidelio SoundRing

The way we listen to digital music in the home has so far tended to be limited to large, low quality, student-bedroom type docks. The Philips Fidelio SoundRing changes all that. This tiny, beautifully designed dock and speaker maximises sound, without taking over your living room. It also offers lots of ways to connect, with wireless connectivity as well as the functionality to plug in iOS devices and connect older MP3 players or phones via an auxiliary cable.

The Fidelio SoundRing has one last trick up its sleeve, which makes it a must-have for any digital music lover. It has a built-in battery so it can be used away from the mains, making it totally versatile. Regardless of whether you're in your garden, working in your garage or anywhere else, you can enjoy your music with one of the most stylish portable speakers on the market.

£235 www.philips.co.uk

Cameras of the future

One of the most interesting new pieces of tech to come out of CES 2012 in Las Vegas was the Lytro camera. The Lytro captures every piece of light on every plane, to take incredibly vibrant and colourful pictures. However, the big headline grabber is that you can refocus pictures after you've taken them, thanks to the huge amount of light and detail, giving you ultimate control of your shots.

Olympus Pen E-P3

If there's one digital camera inspired by desirability and quality, it's the Olympus Pen. Synonymous with great design and fantastic results, the Pen has the looks of a classic film camera and the dimensions of a point-and-shoot. But behind the compact build and retro exterior it packs in some serious technology. The Pen not only offers full manual controls – enabling you to be more creative with your photography and achieve stunning results – it also has an interchangeable lens, giving you the versatility of a full-sized DSLR in a tiny package. Photo quality is fantastic, while the P3 – the third-generation Pen – is the first in the range to feature a touchscreen viewfinder for browsing your images and making fine adjustments to the settings.

£699 www.olympus.com

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Windows 8 on tablets

If you're a tablet owner you might well find that there's more you can't do with it than you can. Programs such as Microsoft Office are either not available, or have stripped down apps, while rich web experiences and flash sites such as BBC iPlayer might not be compatible. Windows 8 on tablets will change this altogether. The Metro interface, with its large colourful tiles that act as icons for all your programs and files, makes using touchscreens totally intuitive, turning Windows on tablets from an awkward port into a seamless experience. What's more, it will have a fully supported new version of Office 15, which will bring Word and PowerPoint onto handheld devices for the first time, and there'll be a fully functioning app store, so you'll have a host of programs to choose from.
www.microsoft.com/windows

Windows 8 desktop

While Windows 8 is set to change the face of tablets, it's easy to forget that from autumn, desktop PCs, laptops and Ultrabooks will also feature Microsoft's new operating system. Microsoft has said that Windows 8 will be even lighter and faster than Windows 7, which means that the current array of PCs will be able to run the new OS. The beta of Windows 8 is available to download now for you to try for free.

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BETTER SOUNDS

Transform your PC media and gaming experience by getting a set of the best speakers available. **By Matt Hanson**

MicroLab X16

Price £70
(www.microlab.com)

Microlab's X16 speakers include customisable low and high tones, but the controls are flimsy and, even with the bass turned up, the X16s sound muddy and flat. We were also unable to get any crisp definition on the higher end notes. Add to this the overall tacky, plasticky build quality – which may have something to do with the low-quality sound – and the X16s feel like a missed opportunity.

★★

Sony SRS-DB500

Price £127
(www.sony.co.uk)

Despite their plastic construction, these speakers do a blinding job of reproducing the sounds of explosions in a modern action film or computer game. The bass is clear, the treble is just right and they have a deep, cavernous sound that only Sony's experience can bring. Music sounded great, too. There's a handy line-in on the front for connecting your iPod or Walkman as well.

★★★★★

WorldMags.net

Logitech Z623

Price £120
(www.logitech.com)

At £120 the Z623 certainly doesn't come cheap, but the sound is deep and rich, and the most 'three-dimensional' we've ever heard from a 2.1 system. The bass and treble are perfectly tuned out of the box as well, so despite our reservations about the THX certification, it actually seems to mean something here. If there's a slight niggle, it's that the same connection system Logitech uses on its lower-end speakers is present here.

★★★★

Corsair SP2500

Price £169
(www.corsair.com)

There's a lot to like about the SP2500 in terms of audio quality. The sound is clear and defined, and the whopping sub-woofer does a good job of handling the bass without cracking up at higher volumes. The system features a clever late night mode, which filters high and low frequencies to keep partners sweet at night, and an FPS mode makes pinpointing gun fire in games easier.

★★★★☆

iLuv Boom Cubes

Price £20
(www.iluv.co.uk)

iLuv's Rubik's Cube-size speakers are smaller than most of the 2.1 systems' satellite speakers. Fortunately, the sound they produce is incredibly rich and detailed. The price is very reasonable too. You won't be able to use the speakers with a phone or MP3 player without a separate USB power source, which is a shame because their compact size makes the Boom Cubes ideal travel speakers.

★★★

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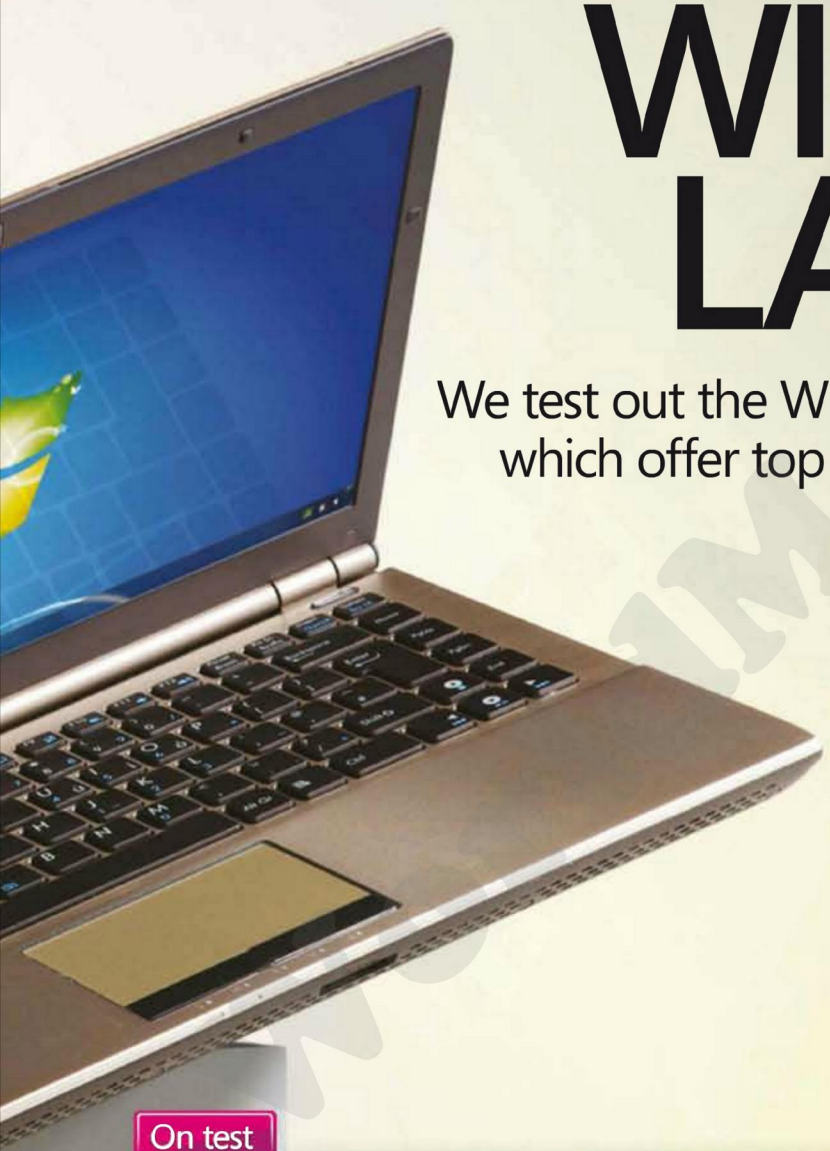
The big test...

AWARD WINNING LAPTOPS

We test out the Windows 7 Collection of laptops, which offer top design and a great experience



Frustrated with low-power budget laptops packed with crapware giving Windows a bad name, Microsoft has fought back with its 'Collection' – a showcase of the best-designed laptops that offer the consumer a great, enjoyable out-of-the-box computing experience.

The Windows 7 Collection selects machines in four categories: Mobile, Entertainment, Everyday and Professional. The machines come from a range of manufacturers and offer a complete cross-section of price and performance. Each of the 30 PCs in the Collection has been picked to showcase a key area of home computing.

We've had a scout through ourselves and created a shortlist of our eight favourites from the list and put them to the test. We've reviewed them over the following pages before settling on what we feel is the ultimate Windows 7 machine. Read on to find out more…

On test

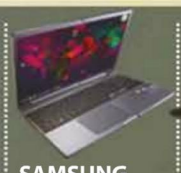
ACER
ASPIRE S3
£899
A powerful portable, unfortunately marred by rubbish battery life

ASUS
U46SV
£699
Surprisingly bulky, but with impressive performance and a nice keyboard

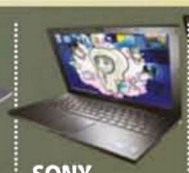
DELL
INSPIRON 15R
£429
Good usability and an excellent screen compensate for poor portability

HP
ENVY 17
£1,400
A premium laptop with excellent design and performance to match

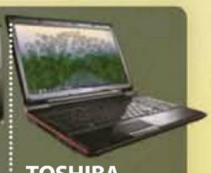
LENOVO
IDEAPAD U300S
£899
A solid performer but doesn't stand out from the crowd, and the keyboard and trackpad are poor



SAMSUNG
700Z5A-S01
£899
Imposing performance from this surprisingly portable machine



SONY
VAIO Z-SERIES
£2,699
The ultimate high-power ultraportable laptop – but we can't help but wince at the cost



TOSHIBA
QOSMIO F750
£1,300
A powerhouse desktop replacement blighted by woeful battery life

WorldMags.net

Acer Aspire S3

£899 www.johnlewis.co.uk

The Acer Aspire S3 is one of Acer's smallest laptops yet, and the price is appealing considering the impressive specs list. With a thickness of 18mm at its widest point, the Aspire S3 may not be as 'size zero' slender as the Toshiba or Asus, but it's certainly thin enough to slide into an oversized handbag. The lid is impressively slim – and also tough enough to take a pounding. There's almost no flex in the centre either, so the display remains protected even when the laptop is bumping around in a bag.

The reduced chassis space means a compact keyboard, the nemesis of anyone with sausage fingers. Thankfully most keys are well-sized, and although the arrow keys are almost comically tiny, touch typing is still a breeze. The touchpad is also a decent size, but cursed with integrated mouse buttons. You need to push the left and right corners of the pad down to simulate mouse clicks. The cursor often skips across the screen when the corners are pushed, leading to incorrect menu selections – after a couple of hours, we came close to busting out the power tools and giving the Aspire S3 a few new air vents. Thankfully you can tap the touchpad's surface for left mouse clicks instead.

The 13.3-inch display is perfectly serviceable for both business and pleasure. It isn't the brightest screen, but the 1,366 x 768-pixel resolution means images are sharp and HD movies look crisp. The glossy Super-TFT finish is reflective, however – a hindrance if you want to use the Aspire S3 outdoors. Regular travellers will prefer the Toshiba's matt screen. Ports are standard for an Ultrabook, with an HDMI connector and two USB ports crammed onto the rear. If you have tons of files to lug around, you'll need to use one of the USB ports to hook up an external hard drive.

Despite the specs listing a 240GB solid state drive, the Acer only reported 200GB of storage. This fills up far too quickly, especially if you're hoping to carry some tunes or movies with you, although it at least gives you super speedy and reliable access to your data. You also have an SD card reader for extra storage.

Small but powerful

The real selling point of the Aspire S3 is the set of components stuffed in its tiny gullet. The dual-core Intel Core i7 ULV processor, backed up by 4GB of memory, had no problem handling all kinds of software at once. Applications loaded quickly (helped in part by that speedy solid state drive) and ran smoothly. In fact, the Aspire S3 proved to be the most powerful Ultrabook we've reviewed, narrowly beating its Asus rival.

Graphical performance is also dependable. Although the GPU is integrated, it's still capable of running multimedia software such as photo and video editing suites, without suffering from glitches or crashes. Unfortunately, the battery life was a lot less impressive. We ran HD video on loop and were disappointed when the Aspire S3 died after 181 minutes. Considering this is an Ultrabook, which is built for portability, the result is disappointing. If you're often on the road, consider the Samsung or Asus instead.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★★☆

Asus U46SV

£699 www.comet.co.uk

As much as we loved the Asus U36JC, we can't say the same for the U46SV. It may be the spiritual successor to the U36JC, but we were surprised by the chunky build and somewhat uninspired design.

The chassis is 38mm thick, which is rather bulky for a laptop this size. At 2.3kg it also weighs a lot more than the U36JC. The U46SV won't exactly weigh you down, but we expected something a lot slimmer and lighter. Compared to the likes of the Sony Vaio S and Samsung 9003X, this is a boxy beast. We also aren't massive fans of the aluminium build, which feels strangely plasticky. The lid is especially weak, bending in the centre under light pressure. Still, we can't complain when it comes to the keyboard. The popular isolation-style design means keys are a great size and well spaced, which makes it perfect for touch-typists.

For some reason Asus built this laptop with a jutting lip at the rear, which prevents the lid from tilting back more than 45° from vertical. This makes it tricky to get a good view of the screen when sat on your lap. Thankfully, the display has decent viewing angles and is impressively bright, although images are occasionally washed-out. However, we still enjoyed watching HD movies and browsing our photo collection. Speaking of which, you can carry a large chunk of media around on the 500GB hard drive – more than 100 HD films, or 100,000 songs or photos. A 5-in-1 memory card reader can be used to boost storage space, or quickly copy your holiday snaps onto your laptop.

Asus has also stuck an extra power button above the keyboard, for booting into its Express Gate OS. This gives you quick access to your media and the internet, booting up in seconds. However, we aren't keen on the stripped-down user interface and limited functions, and would rather wait the extra 20 seconds it takes to boot into Windows.

Strong performance

While we're less than impressed by the overall design, we can't deny this laptop is stuffed with power. One of Intel's latest Core i5 Sandy Bridge chips is backed up by 4GB of memory, providing good enough performance to run any number of applications simultaneously. This sort of bulletproof spec should mean you shouldn't have to upgrade for years.

This laptop also caters to movie and music editors with its Nvidia GeForce GT 540M graphics card. You can run dedicated editing software without any stuttering and even have a blast on most modern games. If you prefer to simply watch movies, you can enjoy HD video with impressively smooth playback.

Despite excellent performance and graphics, this laptop also boasts fantastic battery life. Most portables manage less than three hours on our tests before dying, but the U46SV lasted almost double that before the screen went black. It's a shame the body isn't slimmer and lighter, or this would be one of the most powerful portable laptops we've used in a long time.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★☆☆

Dell Inspiron 15R

£429 www.dell.co.uk

Dell has been on good form recently, releasing a wealth of great laptops. And, while the Inspiron 15R has been around for six months, it's still a good choice thanks to the strong performance, usability and design.

If the Inspiron 15R has a flaw, it's the lack of portability thanks to its rather chunky measurements and 2.7kg weight. You'll be able to fit it into your laptop bag, but the extra weight is noticeable. It features Dell's SWITCH interchangeable lids, meaning if you get bored of the pattern on top of your 15R you can buy a different one and simply switch it round. A neat idea, except for the fact that each lid retails for around £30 – far too much in our opinion.

The rest of the laptop chassis is a glossy black with a large touchpad and a comfortable isolation-style keyboard. Although the keyboard flexes during typing, the keys are well-sized with a decent amount of travel. A small touch is labelling the uppermost F-keys that double as shortcut functions in orange. This stands out against the black keyboard and makes altering volume or brightness a quick and easy experience.

Integrated graphics

The Inspiron 15R is built around a second-generation Intel Core i5 processor with 4GB of RAM. The lack of a dedicated graphics card isn't a serious omission as the integrated Intel HD Graphics card can handle its fair share of image rendering. While *Battlefield 3* is off-limits, you can certainly enjoy older games as well as watch movies or YouTube clips.

In fact, we'd recommend this machine if you plan to watch a lot of media, because the 15.6-inch Super-TFT coated screen is a highlight. It's bright, crisp and clear and the panel boasts a good viewing angle. Text on the screen is easily readable, even if you're not looking at it front on.

As we mentioned earlier, portability is a little dubious here and isn't helped by the 154-minute battery life the Dell managed during our tests. Part of that is due to the brightness of the screen and the volume achievable through the speakers, but we would still have liked to see it last longer. If you're planning to use your new laptop on the move, then you might want to look elsewhere.

That said, there's a healthy selection of features available on the Inspiron 15R that include an HDMI port for connecting to an external monitor or HDTV and an eSata port for transferring data to and from compatible hard drives at high speed. Something you might want to consider if you have a lot of data to store – although the 500GB internal hard drive is not to be sniffed at.

Elsewhere you have two USB ports, a VGA and Ethernet port, an 8-in-1 card reader and a DVD rewritable optical drive.

Overall, despite shortcomings such as the battery life and a lack of portability, we took a shine to the Inspiron 15R and feel it works well as a family and media machine. Offering good value for money, this is a worthwhile choice for anyone looking to pick up a new laptop.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★★☆

HP Envy 17

£1,400 www.currys.co.uk

The Envy is HP's high-performance range and is constantly improving, especially since the arrival of the Beats audio editions. With a 17.3-inch screen, the Envy 17 is the big brother of the family and has the features and performance to prove it.

While the plain black lid of the Envy 17 doesn't scream desirability, the inside more than makes up for it. A sleek, brushed-aluminium design stands out against a black isolation-style keyboard. To the far right is a large circular button that calls up the Beats control panel for playback and recording options.

Typing on the keyboard was comfortable and easy. However, we did notice an unnerving spot of flexing around the far left-hand side, above the slot-loading DVD drive (upgradable to Blu-ray). The keys themselves are backlit and you're also granted a full numeric keypad. The large, central touchpad has a slightly thicker coating that is responsive and comfortable to use. It features integrated mouse buttons built into the pad, which will be a blessing for some and a curse for others.

Screen envy

The real reason you might consider the Envy 17 over its smaller relatives is the bright 17.3-inch LED-backlit screen. With a pixel resolution of 1920 x 1080p, this is geared towards full high-definition content. You can also buy a more expensive 3D-capable Envy 17, but unless you're a die-hard 3D fan, it isn't worth the extra outlay. Viewing angles are impressive and the screen feels firm on its hinges.

Matching the visuals provided by the screen is the audio output from the speakers. Alongside the larger speaker above the keyboard are smaller speakers either side of the front of the chassis for stereo sound. Regulated by the integrated Beats technology, the bass is much more noticeable and, as a result, the sound is thicker and fuller. You are also given a fancy-looking equaliser to adjust the levels yourself to get the most out of your music. And, if you plan to record, you can take advantage of the noise and echo cancellation provided by Beats.

Unsurprisingly for HP's premium model, the Envy 17 has some seriously powerful components, albeit not the best we've seen at this price point. The Sandy Bridge Intel Core i7 CPU is backed up with 8GB of RAM and an ATI Radeon HD 7690M XT dedicated GPU. There's enough power here for anyone interested in high-end gaming, programming or editing. In fact, the HP 17 ships with Photoshop Elements 9 and Premier Elements 9 to get you started. And, thanks to the 1.5TB hard drive, you won't be short of space to fill up.

There's no doubt the Envy 17 is a luxury laptop and an excellent choice. This is very firmly an entertainment and creative machine though – if you want portability or a business-orientated laptop, look elsewhere. There are the smallest of side-niggles, such as the keyboard flex and the battery life, but we were still mightily impressed. This is certainly one of HP's finest creations.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★★★

Lenovo IdeaPad U300S

£899 www.pcworld.co.uk

Despite the Lenovo IdeaPad U300S being a fantastic ultraportable laptop, with a comfortable keyboard, lightweight design and decent amount of power, it does little to stand out from rivals such as the Asus Zenbook. That said, the Lenovo's brushed metal body feels solid, there's little flex and there are contours and lines that add detail, making it more interesting than the myriad Apple MacBook Air clones we've seen elsewhere.

An Intel Core i5 processor is under the hood, which we were a bit disappointed to find when other manufacturers have added Intel Core i7 processors into a smaller chassis. There's also 4GB of RAM and a small but fast 128GB SSD drive.

The less powerful Intel Core i5 processor showed through in our lab tests and the 7,244 score in Cinebench is on the low side, when compared with the Asus Zenbook UX31 and Acer Aspire S3. These are much more powerful systems and the Lenovo has little in reply to make it a real winner.

The battery life made up for this somewhat with 231 minutes of use in our harsh lab tests. This translates to around five hours of web surfing and emailing, which equates to a good day on the move, but nowhere near the seven hours quoted by Lenovo on its marketing literature. However, this still beats much of the competition in this group test. The Lenovo features a 13.6-inch screen and, in a nod to true portability, there's a matt screen with a coating to help stop reflections in direct sunlight. Matt screens tend to polarise opinion: some complain they make the panel dull and lifeless; others love the ability to work outside and near windows, which you don't get with a glossy screen.

Both of these statements are true. With this screen the Lenovo is unsuitable for those who want to enjoy movies and pictures, but it's still a great choice if you want to work on the move.

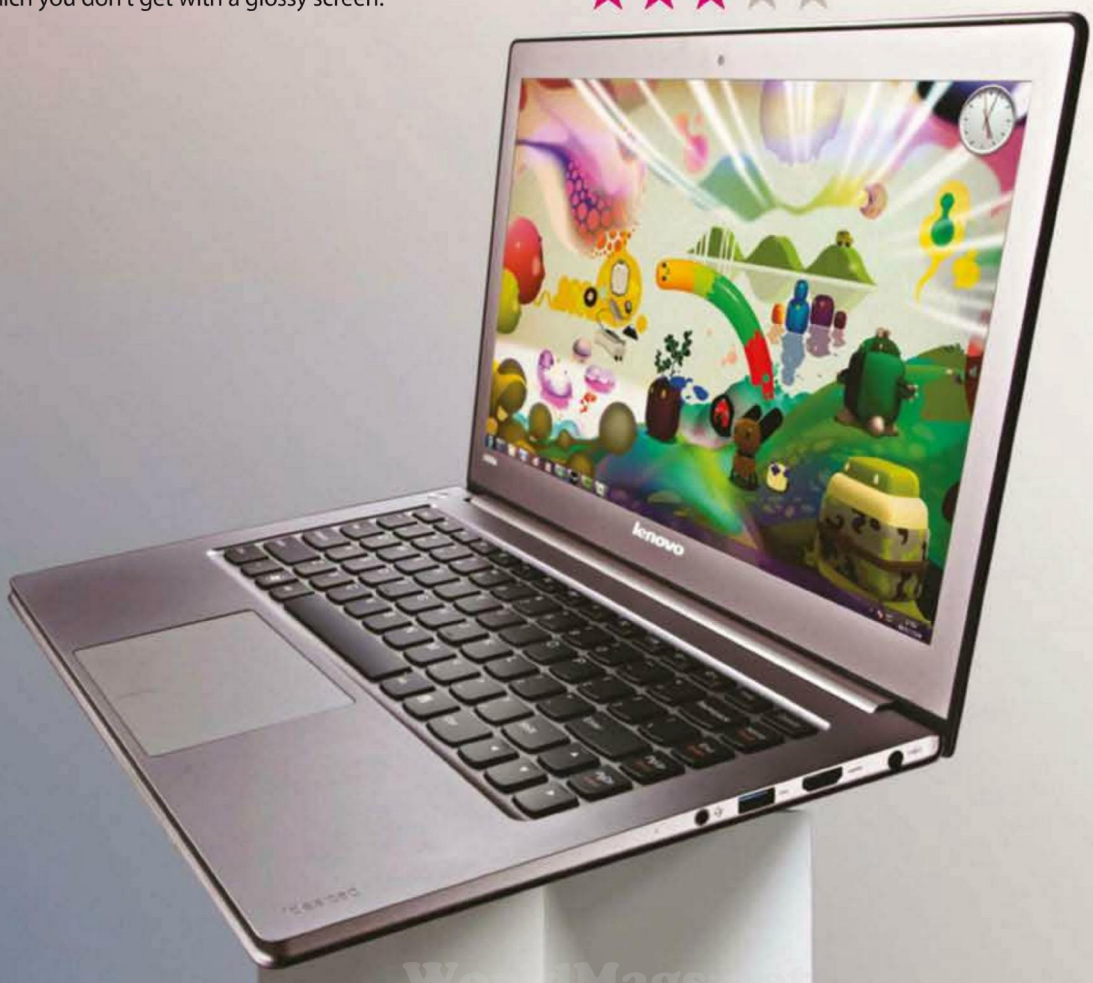
Frustrating to use

Two of the major complaints about Ultrabooks are poor, uncomfortable keyboards and single-button trackpads that are frustrating to use. The Lenovo is little better than most. On the plus side, the keys are as comfortable and natural to use as any Ultrabook. They're well cushioned and well-spaced, with isolation-style keys jutting through the aluminium chassis. However, Lenovo has made the Enter and Backspace keys very small, with the Home, End and Delete keys to the far right. The trackpad is terrible and often clicking and navigating led to chaotic moments, where clicks were misregistered.

In short, the IdeaPad U300S is a good ultraportable, but doesn't offer more than its direct competition here. Battery life is average, performance is mediocre – despite being thicker and heavier than any other Ultrabook – and the keyboard and trackpad are awkward to use. The matt screen is a plus for business buyers, but the lack of a VGA and Ethernet connection found on its Toshiba rival means many will inevitably overlook this laptop.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★☆☆



Samsung 700Z5A-S01

£899 www.amazon.co.uk

The Series 7 Chronos 700Z5A-S01, to give it its full name, is the latest entertainment machine from Samsung. This laptop isn't nearly as slender as the MacBook Air, the Toshiba Portégé or even Samsung's own Series 9 ultraportable, but it packs in the power. Thankfully, this doesn't come at the expense of battery life.

The sleek silver lid is solid at the edges to keep the display from bending and even the centre is surprisingly firm. However, the palmrests are less sturdy, flexing under light pressure.

We have to admit we were a little disappointed by the overall appearance of the Chronos, but were pleased to see the isolation-style 'chiclet' keyboard stretching the width of the interior, giving well-sized keys and enough room for a numeric keypad. Typing is a smooth experience, although the keys don't travel far when hit. The arrow keys are once again crushed into a single row, but we could find them without looking thanks to their wide design. The keyboard is also backlit and a built-in light sensor ensures the subtle glow only turns on when atmospheric lighting is poor, so saves on your battery life.

We were less than enamoured with the touchpad. It's spacious enough, but uses annoying integrated mouse buttons. You have to push the bottom corners to simulate left and right mouse button clicks, which quickly frustrates as the cursor jerks.

Fine display

The 15.6-inch display stretches almost to the edge of the lid, with only a slender bezel in place. A sharp 1,600 x 900 resolution keeps images crisp and clean. There's no glossy coating, so you can use the Chronos outside or in brightly lit interiors.

If you need a machine to keep you entertained on the move, the Chronos' 750GB gives you plenty of space for your games, movies and music. A slot-loading DVD drive has also been packed in. If you'd rather use this laptop as a home entertainment machine, an HDMI port can be used to hook up TVs or monitors, and you have three USB ports, two of which are USB 3.0.

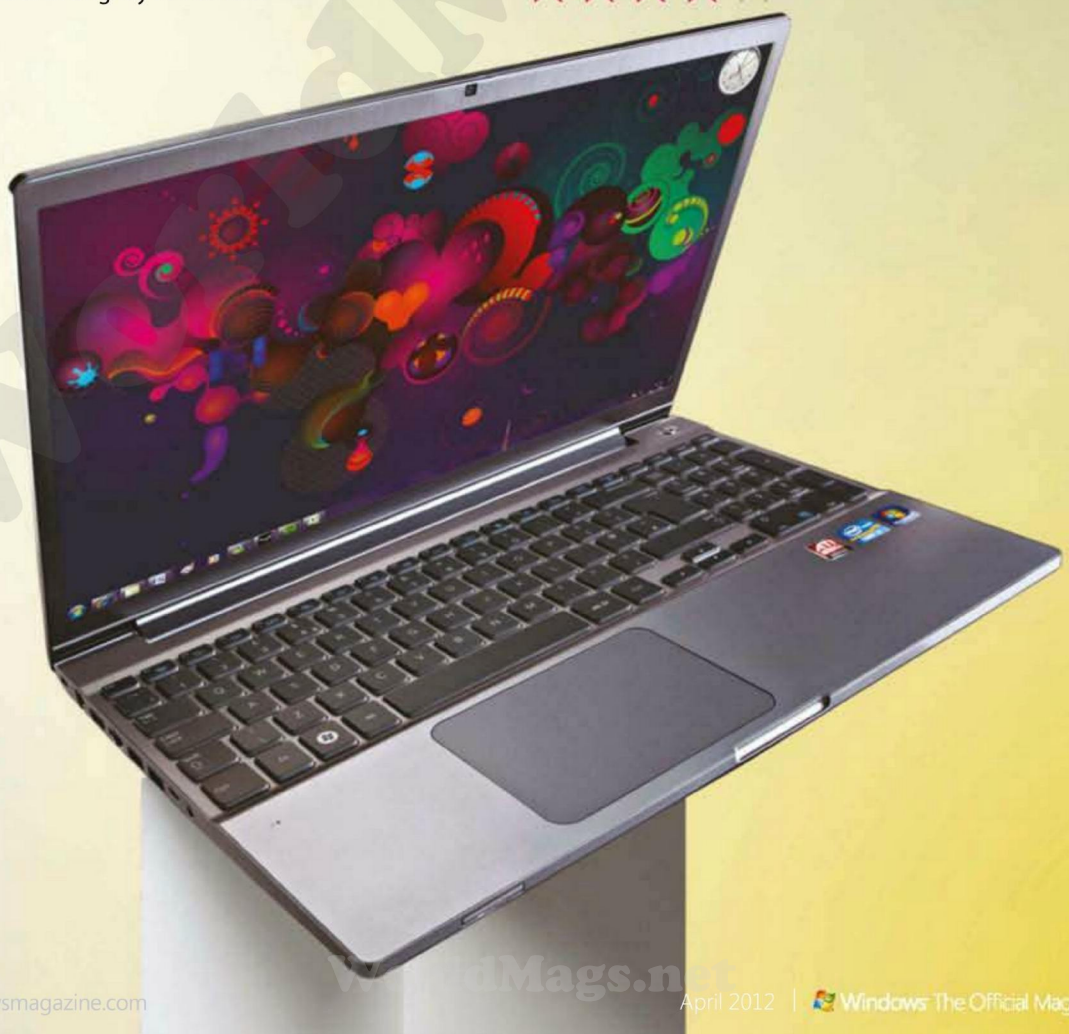
It doesn't skimp in the performance department either. A Sandy Bridge Intel Core i7 processor is in charge, backed up by a generous 8GB of memory. You can run any software imaginable, and should be able to for some time to come.

So, given all that power, how does the battery life stack up? Powering through four hours of our tests before the screen faded to black, the Chronos equalled the likes of the Sony and the Lenovo but unfortunately couldn't touch the Asus. We can't help but look favourably on the Samsung because the extra performance so outstrips most of the other laptops in this group.

The Series 7 Chronos may lack the sexy, curved chassis of the MacBook Air and the slender build of some new Ultrabooks, but it's easily the most powerful laptop in this group test. We would also argue that it represents the best value for money. If you need a portable entertainment machine that won't be out of date any time soon, then the Chronos is well worth considering.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★★☆



WindowsMags.net

Sony VAIO Z-Series

£2,699 www.sony.co.uk

There are few more high-end laptops than the Sony VAIO VPCZ21V9E. It packs awesome power into a tiny frame, but even though the performance and usability are staggering, we just can't justify the huge price tag.

The laptop itself is supremely light at just 1.2kg. The 13-inch screen is vibrant and clear, and there's an anti-glare coating that makes it ideal for using in direct sunlight. On the surface this is a fantastic ultraportable, but with a price tag that eclipses Ultrabooks, what do you actually get?

The build quality is superb, with the carbon fibre chassis feeling strong, while keeping the weight incredibly light. There is some slight flex in the lid and keyboard, but it still feels robust. There isn't a great deal of cushioning on the keys, although there's a fair amount of space between them, which we really liked.

Aesthetically though, the Sony Z-Series is made to look corporate and, frankly, boring in comparison to other machines tested here, such as the HP Envy 17. The black surface picks up fingerprints in seconds and the plain black lid looks more suited to the office than the home.

Got the power

Under the hood there's a top-of-the-range, second-generation Intel Core i7 processor, a member of the coveted Sandy Bridge family. These processors offer the ability to handle 3D graphics on board, as well as limitless power, throttling it back until when you need it, which means it won't sap your battery life while performing mundane tasks such as checking email and surfing the web. It offers four cores and the overall performance is stunning. It aced our tests and anyone looking to edit high-definition video will find this superb.

If there's one thing Ultrabooks and other ultraportables miss, it's connectivity. This is where the VAIO has a trick up its sleeve. It comes with an extra docking station that houses a DVD drive (a Blu-ray option is available), an AMD Radeon 6650M processor with 1GB of video memory and a host of display ports enabling you to connect up to four monitors.

The docking station means the Z Series can instantly transform from one of the lightest and most powerful ultraportables we've seen into a PC to match most gaming machines. However, you can expect to pay another £350 for the docking station and for that price you could just as easily buy a second laptop.

Battery life is impressive and our demanding test eked out 220 minutes. This is enough to watch a Full HD movie away from the mains, and you should be looking at over seven hours of normal use before needing to plug in.

To get this kind of performance from a PC so small and light is phenomenal. However, for the first time there are now realistic alternatives in the form of Ultrabooks. Even though the Sony VAIO is the closest laptop we've seen to a no-compromise between power and portability, it seems unnecessary to spend this much.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★★☆

WorldMags.net

Toshiba Qosmio F750

£1,300 www.toshiba.co.uk

Toshiba's all-conquering Qosmio range was the first to bring us glasses-free 3D, and we were so impressed with the X770 back in issue 65 that we awarded it five stars. The Qosmio F750 continues the tradition, albeit with a couple of drawbacks. The substandard keyboard and paltry battery life might put some off, but anyone looking for a movie powerhouse won't fail to be impressed.

The bright red outer design is eye-catching and complemented by the glossy all-black look under the lid. White LEDs around the touchpad, power button and hotkeys also add a bit of visual flair. Unsurprisingly though, it's neither light nor svelte. Measuring in at 386 x 265 x 39mm with a weight of 3.2kg the Qosmio is more of a desk-based PC replacement than a portable gaming machine.

Once you fire up the laptop though, the lack of portability gets lost in a storm of power provided by the Intel Core i7-2630QM CPU and Nvidia GeForce GT540M dedicated graphics chip.

Interacting with the Qosmio is made all the better by the fantastic screen Toshiba has incorporated. Capable of full 1080p high-definition visuals, the screen is bright, crisp and coated with the reflective Super-TFT coating that adds a degree of richness to the colours in pictures and movies.

The standout feature is, of course, the glasses-free 3D effect. By using the webcam to track your eyes, you can move your head freely while retaining the 3D image unlike, for example, Nintendo's 3DS game system, which requires you to keep your head in one position for the 3D effect. While 3D will appeal to some, others might not be converted yet – and to be fair, the effect isn't as impressive when compared with the standard Active Shutter 3D system. However, considering the price of the glasses, and the prospect of losing them, we're more than happy with this alternative.

Average usability

While the screen and sheer power is fantastic, some of the usability suffers. The keyboard is a standard, flat affair and while the keys are nicely sized, there's some definite flex around the centre and we doubt it could cut it as a serious gaming keyboard. Things are better when it comes to the touchpad. It's responsive and has a non-glossy surface that is comfortable to use. The only drawback is it's a little on the small side. For serious gaming, you're going to want to invest in a USB mouse.

Where the Qosmio falls down is on battery life. Given the specs we didn't expect much in terms of longevity but it gave out after only 74 minutes. It's not a deal-breaker, though. The F750 isn't trying to be an ultraportable and to buy it thinking so is a mistake.

We can't help but like the Qosmio a lot and its decisive pros and cons list should make it an easy decision. If you want hardcore visuals and processing power, we'd recommend it. If you're less fussed about power over battery, and don't like 3D, then save your £1,300 for a different machine.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★★☆

Laptop specifications

All the technical information you need

NAME								
MANUFACTURER	Acer	Asus	Dell	HP	Lenovo	Samsung	Sony	Toshiba
MODEL	Aspire S3	U46SV	Inspiron 15R	Envy 17	IdeaPad U300S	700Z5A-S01	VAIO Z-Series	Qosmio F750
DETAILS								
PRICE	£899 (inc. VAT)	£699 (inc. VAT)	£429 (inc. VAT)	£1,400 (inc. VAT)	£899 (inc. VAT)	£899 (inc. VAT)	£2,699 (inc. VAT)	£1,300 (inc. VAT)
ECODE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	458931	N/A	VPCZ21V9E/B.CEK	N/A
DELIVERY	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
SUPPLIER	www.johnlewis.co.uk	www.comet.co.uk	www.dell.co.uk	www.currys.co.uk	www.pcworld.co.uk	www.amazon.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk	www.toshiba.co.uk
PHONE	N/A	N/A	0844 444 4699	0844 561 1234	0844 561 1234	08456 049049	0845 6000 124	0844 847 8944
SPECIFICATIONS								
PROCESSOR	Intel Core i7-2637M (1.7GHz)	Intel Core i5-2410M (2.3GHz)	Intel Core i5-2410M	Intel Core i7-2670QM (2.2GHz)	Intel Core i5-2467QM (1.6GHz)	Intel Core i7-2675QM (2GHz)	Intel Core i7-2620M (2.7GHz)	Intel Core i7-2630QM
MEMORY	4GB	4GB	4GB	8GB	4GB	8GB	8GB	6GB
STORAGE	200GB SSD	500GB	500GB	1.5TB	128GB SSD	750GB	256GB	640GB
PRICE OF EXTRA BATTERY	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SCREEN SIZE & TYPE	13.3-inch Super-TFT	14-inch Super-TFT	15.6-inch Super-TFT	17.3-inch Super-TFT	13.6-inch TFT	15.6-inch TFT	13.1-inch Super-TFT	15.6-inch Super-TFT
NATIVE RESOLUTION (PIXELS)	1,366 x 768	1,366 x 768	1,366 x 768	1,920 x 1080	1,366 x 768	1,600 x 900	1,600 x 900	
GRAPHICS ADAPTOR	Intel HD 3000	Nvidia GeForce GT540M	Intel HD 3000	ATI Radeon HD 7690M XT	Intel HD 3000	AMD Radeon HD6750M	AMD Radeon HD6650M (with dock)	Nvidia GeForce GT540M
OPTICAL DRIVE	None	DVD RW	DVD RW	DVD RW	None	DVD RW	None (DVD with dock)	Blu-ray
OPERATING SYSTEM	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Home Premium	Windows 7 Professional	Windows 7 Home Premium
BASIC WARRANTY	1 Year C&R	1 Year C&R	1 Year C&R	1 Year C&R	1 Year C&R	1 Year C&R	2 Years C&R	1 Year C&R
DIMENSIONS (W X H X D)	323 x 219 x 19mm	341 x 256 x 38mm	376 x 260 x 35 mm	450 x 270 x 32 mm	324 x 221 x 16mm	382 x 257 x 35mm	330 x 210 x 20mm	386 x 265 x 39mm
WEIGHT (KG)	1.4kg	2.3kg	2.4kg	3.6kg	1.4kg	2.4kg	1.2kg	3.2kg
PORTS								
MEDIA CARDS	SD Card	4-in-1	8-in-1	3-in-1	None	4-in-1	3-in-1	4-in-1
BLUETOOTH	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
USB	2	3	4	4	2	3	2	4
DISPLAY	HDMI	HDMI, VGA	HDMI	HDMI, DisplayPort	HDMI	HDMI	HDMI, DisplayPort	HDMI, VGA
BUNDLED SOFTWARE	None	Various Asus applications	Various Dell applications	Photoshop Elements, Premier Elements	None	Various Samsung applications	Various Sony applications	Various Toshiba applications
INTEGRATED CAMERA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ADDITIONAL EXTRAS	None	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	None	USB 3.0	USB 3.0	USB dock	USB 3.0
TEST RESULTS								
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★	★★
FEATURES & BUILD	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
COMMENTS								
	A powerful portable marred by rubbish battery life	Surprisingly bulky, but with impressive performance	Good usability and an excellent screen compensate for poor portability	A premium laptop with excellent design and performance to match	A solid performer but doesn't stand out from the crowd	A real performer of an entertainment machine that's also surprisingly portable	The ultimate high-power ultraportable	A powerhouse desktop replacement blighted by woeful battery life

WorldMags.net

www.officialwindowsmagazine.com

The winner: HP ENVY 17

Find out more about the laptops that swayed us

While Microsoft stopped short of picking one single machine as the ultimate choice from its Collection, we're not afraid to go ahead and single out a winner. We felt that the HP Envy 17 offered the most polished and enjoyable user experience in the Windows Collection. Unlike the Sony VAIO Z-Series, we reckon this beauty can justify its mammoth price tag with some excellent features and a very attractive design. The components inside mean that Windows 7 is just the tip of the iceberg and we had no problems running high-end gaming and editing software on the Envy 17. The knowledge that you've got a massive 1.5TB hard drive to fall back on is also rewarding and even the mundane stuff like typing or browsing the internet is a pleasure here.

"It's the screen that steals the show – the Full HD display will effectively consign your TV to the loft"

Other laptops in this group test have their advantages. The Qosmio offers 3D and the Ultrabooks will give you battery life and portability, but with the Envy, it's the screen that steals the show. The bright, Full HD 17.3-inch display will effectively consign your television to the loft. Entire afternoons were lost in the *Windows: The Official Magazine* office marvelling at the high-definition clarity of the BBC's *Great Barrier Reef* series. We can safely say that of all the Windows Collection laptops here, the HP Envy 17 is the one to go for. ■

Runner-up

DELL INSPIRON 15R

Forget, for the moment, the ludicrously priced interchangeable lids and look at the Dell Inspiron 15R as a value-for-money machine for the everyman. It's got all the right factors in place, a good keyboard, decent specifications and – even though it's a bit chunky – it's not too heavy. The only part that doesn't match up to our expectations is the battery life and if that's a deal-breaker for you, then spend a little extra and opt for the Asus U46SV – another well-rounded value choice.

Because of the 4GB of RAM and 500GB hard drive, you're well placed to enjoy the Windows experience with the Inspiron 15R, although don't expect to indulge in any heavy graphical editing – that's not what this machine is about. What it is though, is a relatively inexpensive laptop suitable for the whole family that should last you well into the Windows 8 era.

At a glance

See how the machines on test performed

PRODUCT NAME	BATTERY LIFE (MINUTES)	PERFORMANCE	GAMING
ACER ASPIRE S3	181		
ASUS U46SV	330		
DELL INSPIRON 15R	154		
HP ENVY 17	171		
LENOVO IDEAPAD U300S	231		
SAMSUNG 700Z5A-S01	239		
SONY VAIO Z-SERIES	220		
TOSHIBA QOSMIO F750	76		

POOR GOOD EXCELLENT

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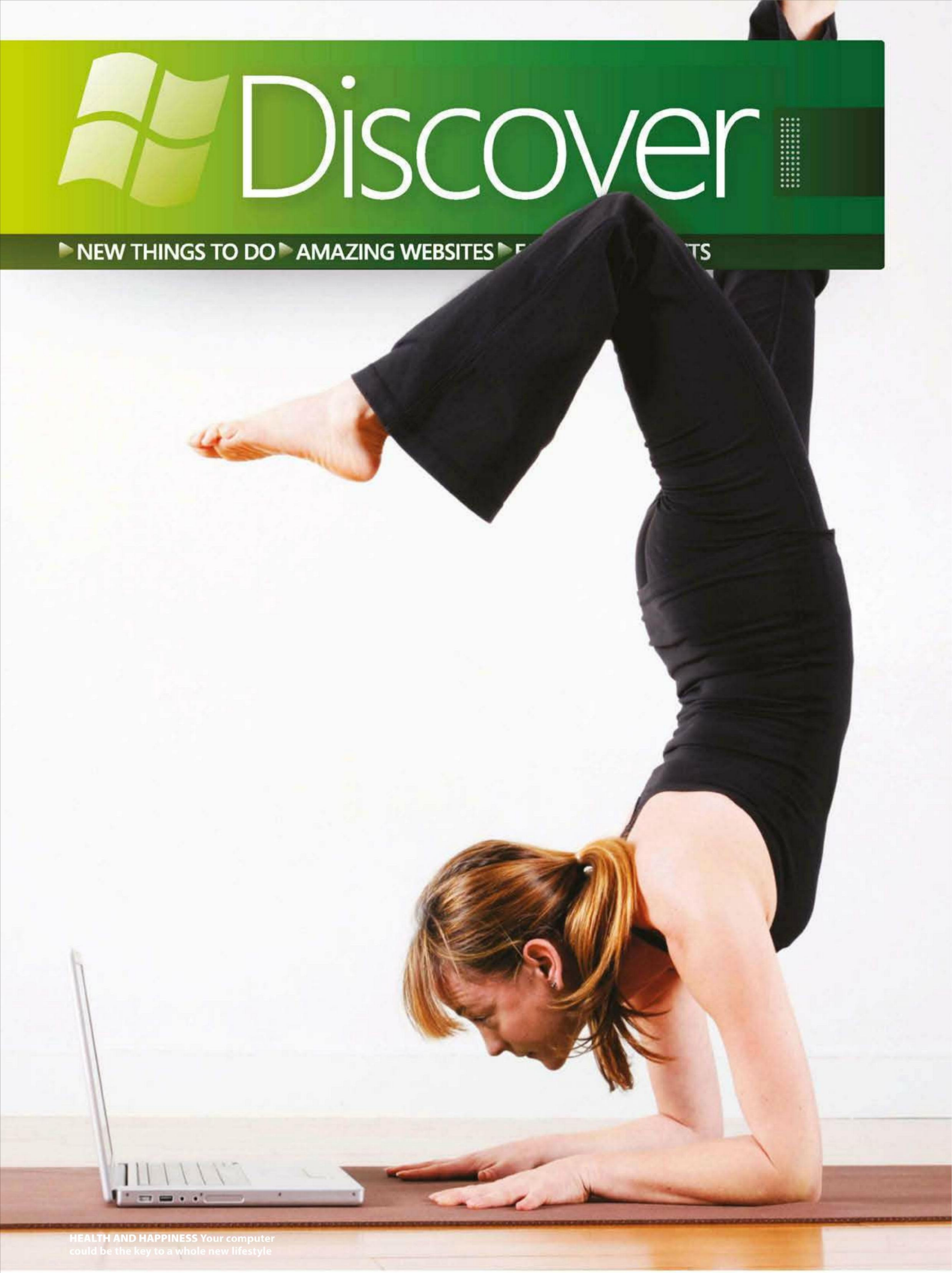

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS Your computer could be the key to a whole new lifestyle

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Self-improvement!

FIND A BRAND NEW YOU WITH YOUR COMPUTER

Feel good about yourself by eating better, getting more exercise and helping out other people

Around this time of year, going to the gym becomes a chore, new year's resolutions slip and winter seems like an interminable bout of horrible weather. However, spring is just around the corner, so it's a good time to get out and about to generate some mood-boosting endorphins and vitamin D. Here's how to plan life improvements from the comfort of your PC.

There's nothing quite like the heart-warming feeling of helping out vulnerable people or litter-picking a countryside footpath. Do-it (www.do-it.org.uk) describes itself as "volunteering made easy", and includes voluntary positions at everything from local museums to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Enter your postcode and areas of interest, and Do-it shows you available vacancies in your locality.

While helping others is great, it's important to look after yourself, too. The NHS's Live Well site at www.nhs.uk/livewell is packed full of friendly, useful advice and information. There are exercise plans, including the ever-popular Couch to 5K running schedule, along with diet advice and health-boosting tips.

Spring is a great time for cycling, plus it's an eco-friendly activity. Sustrans (www.sustrans.org.uk) is host to cycle maps of the UK and information on local projects. If you don't want to avoid traffic, CycleStreets (www.cyclestreets.net) can show you how to get from A to B via quiet roads and dedicated cycle tracks. Enter your start point and destination, and you can print a route that highlights every turn.

You don't have to jump on a bike though – you could already be burning calories. Many phones come with GPS software to work out how far you walk to work, or how many calories you burn taking the dog for a walk. If you don't have such a phone, you can still use www.mapmyrun.com to see how far your run takes you. If you're more adventurous, you can use it to see how far you've gone in a kayak or on a skateboard.

> "Spring is a great time for cycling, plus it's an eco-friendly activity"

Gardening is a great way to get outside, and digging burns 340 calories an hour. The BBC site at www.bbc.co.uk/gardening is a comprehensive gardening guide, and it includes a planner of what to plant when.

HERE'S WHERE TO START *Find your ideal sport*

If you're anything like us, you probably won't have enjoyed taking part in sport since you were forced to stand around on a school football pitch in the freezing cold winter weather. However, there's a sport for everyone, and the NHS's What's Your Sport? quiz can help you to find an activity that's perfectly suited to your aptitude and psychological profile. Begin by visiting www.nhs.uk/livewell and clicking on 'Find the sport that's right for you' on the right-hand side.

PROFILE What's Your Sport? asks you about your exercise levels and the sports you enjoy

MIND GAMES The test asks you to complete three simple games to test your reactions and aptitude

NEAR YOU You're recommended a suitable sport, and you can see a local map of where you can try it

The Knowledge...

DLNA

Aha – deoxyribonucleic acid.
No – you're thinking of DNA. DLNA stands for Digital Living Network Alliance, a non-profit trade organisation started by Sony in 2003. Its aim is to make media accessible on a range of platforms across a home network quickly and easily, so there's no fumbling with settings or reams of cable.

How does it work?
Put simply, any device bearing the DLNA certification (logo above) can communicate with other devices via the same network you use to connect to the internet. For example, a DLNA-certified games console can stream films to any DLNA-certified television on the same network – even if it's not connected to it directly.

Are there many such devices?
You may already have a few. The latest internet-capable TVs are DLNA-certified, as are the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3. Some printers, set-top-boxes, PCs, phones and digital photo frames also come with DLNA certification.

Can I add DLNA to devices?
Windows Media Center supports DLNA, and it can be set up to act as a media server. Since January last year, other network-connected non-DLNA devices have been retrofitted with DLNA certification, such as the Skifta program for Android phones and tablets.

What does DLNA support?
Music, photos and movies can all be sent to DLNA-certified devices. It's handy if you have a huge collection of movies on your PC in the office and want to stream them to a PC in your living room.

What do I need?
You need at least two DLNA-capable devices. It's a good idea to set one up as a server – a PC full of music, for example. From here, everything is done automatically, and it uses your home network to send data to and from devices.

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IAN MOULSTER, MICROSOFT UK

WINDOWS INSIDER

EXPOSING YOUR PC'S SECRETS

MICROSOFT CONFIDENTIAL

Windows 7

Search the internet from the Start menu

The search box on the Start menu is great for finding programs and files on your PC, but did you know you can use it to search the internet as well? Click the 'Start' button, type **GPEDIT.MSC** and press [Return]. Under User Configuration on the left-hand side of the window, click 'Administrative Templates', then double-click 'Start Menu and Taskbar'. Double-click 'Add Search Internet link to Start Menu' and select 'Enabled > OK'. Now when you search in the Start menu, you can select 'Search the internet' to bring up a search in your default search engine.

Windows Vista

Create a panoramic photo

To create a great panoramic photo, you need Windows Live Photo Gallery. If you don't have it yet, go to http://explore.live.com/windows-live-essentials, click 'Download now' and when you're asked what you want to install, select 'Photo Gallery'. Run Live Photo Gallery and open the images you want to turn into a panorama. For the best results, make sure the images were taken from the same spot, and their edges overlap slightly. Hold [Ctrl] on the keyboard and click on each photo you want to add. Click 'Create > Create panoramic photo'. Give the image a name and you're done.

Windows XP

One-click image resizing

Resizing images can be a chore. First you must open the file in your image editor, then use the tools to make it smaller or bigger. However, there's a great tool that makes resizing images simple. It's called Image Resizer and it's a PowerToy, an application made by Microsoft that adds functionality to Windows XP. Go to http://bit.ly/xIFPHZ and click 'PowerToys', then click 'Download' under Image Resizer. Once downloaded and installed, right-click an image and choose the size you want the image to be.

Struggling to get something to work? Need a tip?
Then email us your woes (to windowsmagazine@futurenet.com with the subject line 'Windows Insider') and we'll share your perfect Windows tweaks in a future issue.

Discover this... Cut the Rope

Get roped in

Experience the excitement of a new wave of HTML5-based websites as you enjoy a highly addictive, new online game

HTML5 is a new language that's being used to build some of the most exciting new websites. Microsoft has put its weight behind this innovative language, and Internet Explorer 9 is at the forefront of HTML5 support.

Microsoft teamed up with ZeptoLab to bring this fantastic example of how powerful, interactive and fun HTML5 websites can be. Visit www.cuttherope.ie to play this excellent physics-based puzzle game. The goal is to cut ropes holding a round sweet, getting the sweet to fall into the mouth of a green monster while collecting as many stars as possible. It's great fun, looks fantastic and is highly addictive. Even better, it's an excellent example of what the future holds for websites. ■

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Cycle from London to Paris in support of Computer Aid International (Registered Charity No 1069256) – improving education and healthcare in developing countries through technology.

For more information email **events@computeraid.org** call **020 8361 5540** or register online now at **www.computeraid.org/events**

Computer Aid International

computer aid international cycle challenge

london to paris 2012

29 JUNE - 2 JULY

Join us on this long weekend challenge linking two great European cities, covering 300km in 3 days!
Money raised from this event helps to reduce poverty by providing practical ICT solutions.

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Download this...

VLC media player

www.videolan.org/vlc

This media player has been around for an age, but its latest version is an absolutely essential download. The key thing about the VLC media player is that it can play just about anything you give it, because the software supports an enormous range of video and audio formats, including OGG, MP2, MP3, MP4, DivX, plus various high-definition codecs. You can even play back zipped files, too. So whether it's something that your friend gave you on a USB stick, a file you downloaded from the internet, or a photo your child got off their camera, the ability to play it back is here. The simple interface is a joy to use and we prefer it to pretty much all other media players out there.

PLAY TIME The new version of VLC makes it even easier to play anything you want

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FRIDAY

Everyone's talking about...

HOW WINDOWS WILL CHANGE HARDWARE

Laptops and tablets are set for a Windows 8 revolution

One thing was crystal clear after the recent Consumer Electronics Show (CES) – we'll be thinking about portable laptops very differently after Windows 8 arrives. Intel is talking up its thin and light Ultrabook laptops from the likes of Toshiba, Asus and Lenovo, but says that later this year many models will have not only touchscreens for Windows 8, but also hardware such as accelerometers and GPS that we've seen in phones and tablets (the accelerometer is the thing that tells your phone which way up it is). The Ultrabook may be a marketing term more than anything else, but Intel is certainly set to lead the charge into a new generation of computing.

What we'll also see is a new generation of ultraportable laptops that can also convert into a Windows 8 tablet. The Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga is a notebook that has a 360° flip-and fold-design, so you can use it whichever way you want.

However, the Ultrabook designs are still based on Intel's Core processor line-up. So, while you get plenty of performance and all-day computing, you don't get the 10- or 20-hour battery life of a tablet. Low power chips have traditionally been the preserve of ARM. The Cambridge-based chip design company powers just about every phone and tablet so far released, including Apple's iPhone and iPad, and the Asus Transformer Prime – probably the best Android-based tablet so far.

ARM designs are reworked by its partners, so Apple makes its own chips for the iPhone and iPad, while Nvidia makes the Tegra 3 quad-core chip that powers the Transformer Prime. ARM-based processors are extremely power efficient and graphically capable, too.

> "A new generation of laptops will convert into Windows 8 tablets"

Windows 8 will be able to run on ARM-based hardware – a big step for Microsoft – so it's possible that we'll see ARM-based laptop or netbook devices appearing in 2012. We will certainly see a lot of Windows 8 tablets that take advantage of the operating system's touch-based Metro user interface.

Intel is now trying to get in on ARM's traditional stronghold of the smartphone market, too, so it seems that everybody wants to do everything. Intel announced a new Atom Z2460 low power platform designed for smartphones and tablets. And, while we were sceptical about whether Intel could sign up partners to make phones and tablets with it, Lenovo and Motorola have come on board, so expect Intel-powered phones and tablets to debut during the remainder of 2012. ■

THE 60-SECOND QUIZ

Pens at the ready, your time starts now!

1 Who bought Skype for a whopping $8.5 billion in 2011?
A) Microsoft
B) Google
C) BT

2 Which major company is behind the Chrome web browser?
A) Apple
B) Oracle
C) Google

3 Who makes the Vaio line of laptops?
A) Toshiba
B) Sony
C) Samsung

4 Which legendary name in photography recently applied for bankruptcy protection?
A) Nikon
B) Kodak
C) Canon

5 What does the O in OLED display stand for?
A) Optical
B) Optimised
C) Organic

6 What's Intel's new marketing name for thin and light laptops?
A) Ultrabook
B) Netbook
C) Airbook

Answers
1 A
2 C
3 B
4 B
5 C
6 A

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1 Microblogging heaven

Like Twitter, Tumblr is a microblogging platform and social networking website. It enables people to post text, images, videos, links, quotes and audio to their tumblelog, a short-form blog that's ideally suited to those who don't want to get bogged down with the all the extras you get in a site such as Facebook. You can follow other users and reblog their posts, or choose to make your tumblelog private. It has a streamlined interface and anyone familiar with the minimalist design of Twitter will love it.

2 Personal profile

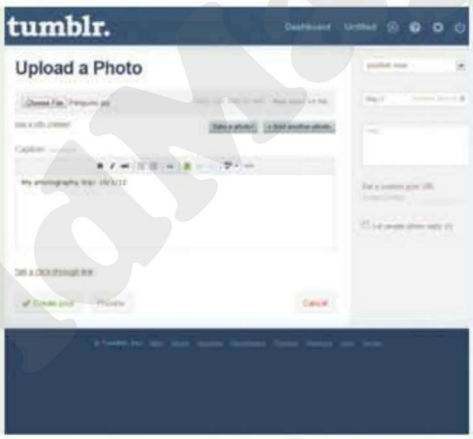
Tumblr enables you to put yourself out there in a very personalised way, taking the Facebook approach to profile detail but the Twitter approach to ease of use. The initial profile setup has a handy four-step guide to get you off to the best start. Upload a photo of yourself, choose a design, follow people and change your avatar. Unlike most social networking platforms, you can actually customise your Tumblr page by editing the HTML, meaning you can get the exact look and feel you're after, going beyond the usual templates.

Journey to the centre of...

www.tumblr.com

4 Follow others

Like Twitter, Tumblr is very much about following others and delivering their life stream in a continual flow. A '+' icon appears next to people on Tumblr who you can follow – just click to add. To make it easier to find people to follow, you can use the Explore Tumblr option from the home page, which puts Tumblr accounts into categories such as Tech, Fashion or History. There's even a feedback scale and activity graph next to each person, so you can see how reliable and active they are on the site.



3 Start posting

The Dashboard, your admin area, enables you to quickly post photos, videos, audio or links by just one click on the appropriate icon – far simpler than Facebook. In terms of posting text, the site is also more flexible. There's a choice of text, quote or chat. Text is the most blog-like – simply an entry in your tumblelog – whereas Quote puts a short piece of text in quotation marks and enables you to also add a source from a website. Chat is used to share a snippet of a conversation.

Discover this... Pocket Village

Find the perfect break

If you can't decide where to go on holiday this year, ask Pocket Village for some suggestions

It's never easy deciding what to do for your annual holiday, but thanks to the power of web search, the hassle can be taken out of the research process. The best site we've found for this is Pocket Village (www.pocketvillage.com), which aggregates more than 11,000 interesting and adventurous tours and activities from 3,500-plus operators. It enables you to select an activity, location, dates and budget, and matches you with the most appropriate packages. So if you're looking for a walking holiday in Nepal or a scuba diving break in the Seychelles, you can get all the offers without having to visit separate agents' sites. Still struggling to find the perfect destination? Hit 'Inspire me' to make it easier. ■

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Rufus Hound

DIGITAL LIFE

RUFUS HOUND TELLS US WHAT HE GETS UP TO ON HIS COMPUTER AND ON THE WEB

Occupation: *Comedian*

Rufus Hound is a TV presenter and comedian. He recently took part in a project with Windows called Your PC Mate, where he travelled around the country giving out new PCs to worthy winners and showing them how Windows 7 can help them in their daily lives. His stand-up DVD, *Being Rude,* is available online and at HMV now, and his book *Stand-up Put Downs* is available in all good bookshops and online.

This... or that?

North or south? *South* Roger Moore or Sean Connery? *Sean Connery* Email or letter? *Email* Marmite or marmalade? *Marmite* Bus or train? *Train* Freeview or satellite? *Cable* Classical or rock? *Rock* Ebook or paper? *Paper* Darwin or God? *Darwin* Radio 2 or Radio 4? *Radio 4* Tomato ketchup or HP brown sauce? *Mix them* Summer or winter? *Winter*

StumbleUpon is one of my favourite sites. I should be appalled by the amount of my life that's been wasted/enriched by this. By telling it what you're into, it finds stuff you dig. This is why I have so many images of superheroes on the toilet.

My favourite gadget is my Samsung Series 9 Notebook. It's small, boots in three seconds from hibernation and has excellent battery life. It's started coming with me everywhere.

If I could bring back one thing from the future it would be the Omniweb. So much of my life is sorted out online, that patchy/expensive/changeable/slow roving web access drives me psychotic.

I really don't like Facebook. I was on it for a while, but the way it's designed seemed to have at its core the notion that everyone can see everything. Who wants their mum to see pictures of their stag do?

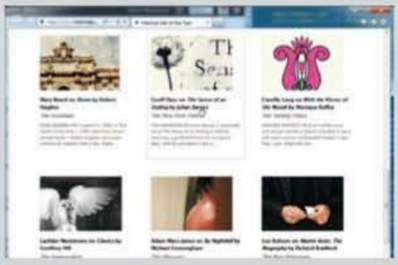
Rufus's twitter

twitter.com/rufushound "I'm at the audition for the new *Mastermind* chair – a stool's walked in. What a dreamer."

Add to Favourites... + Must-see websites

www.futurity.org
Love reading about science? Futurity cuts out the journalism and lets scientists publish their findings directly to the public. Expect to see important discoveries as they happen.

http://bit.ly/writersdesktops
Possibly inspired by 'On the couch' in this very magazine, *The Guardian* takes a look at writers' desktops. See how the likes of Louise Doughty, Steven Hall and Tom McCarthy arrange their icons.



www.hatchetjobofthe year.com
The Hatchet Job of the Year Award puts 2011's harshest book reviews in one place. Read the reviews – they're bitter, cynical and very, very amusing. ■

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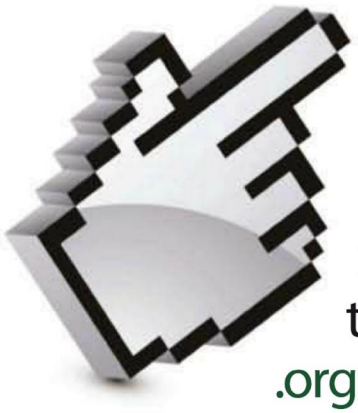
Facts & figures

Matt Hanson reveals a host of fascinating digital facts

WHAT'S IN A DOMAIN NAME?



By the end of 2011 there were 95.5 million websites with .com domain names, compared to 13.8m .net, 9.3m .org and 7.6m .biz domain names. Fancy your own domain name? Check out www.123-reg.co.uk.

© THINKSTOCK

One billion downloads...

…of Google Earth have been completed since its launch in 2005. Google has added lots of handy features to the program over the years. You can now visit 3D rendered cities, visit 1,288 shipwrecks in 3D, explore half of the known oceans in high resolution and visit landmarks around the world. Despite its name, it's not limited to our planet – there are 100m stars and 200m galaxies mapped in Google Earth. Embark on your own expedition at www.google.com/earth.

THE AVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA DAY ON THE INTERNET

168 MILLION EMAILS SENT

694,445 SEARCH QUERIES

695,000+ FACEBOOK STATUS UPDATES

370,000+ MINUTES OF VOICE CALLS ON SKYPE

98,000+ TWEETS

6,600 NEW PICTURES UPLOADED TO FLICKR

600+ NEW VIDEOS UPLOADED TO YOUTUBE

Source www.go-globe.com

There are now 2.1 billion...

…people on the internet – over a third of the total population. There are 555m websites, and because many of us have registered with several sites, there are 2.4bn social networking accounts. The total number of email accounts in the world is 3.146bn, and there are 2.6bn instant messaging accounts. To get your own download Windows Live Messenger from http://explore.live.com/messenger.

Were you online over Christmas?

Figures released by Sky Broadband show that peak online traffic on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day is **24 per cent** lower than on an average weekday. The amount of data downloaded is **20 per cent** lower than on an average Saturday or Sunday. This makes it the quietest period for the internet all year. TV viewing, on the other hand, is **22 per cent** higher than on an average day.

VIDEO GAMES PLAYERS BY AGE
16 to 24 year old 23 per cent
25 to 45 year old 44 per cent
45 to 65 year old 33 per cent
Source Internet Advertising Bureau UK (IAB)

WorldMags.net

New gear...

From budget accessories to stylish PCs, there's a world of fascinating products at your fingertips

Kensington Absolute Power Laptop, Phone, Tablet Charger

£100 (www.kensington.com)

The Kensington Absolute Power Laptop, Phone, Tablet Charger isn't a head turner, but it sits unobtrusively on a desk and does a good job of charging three devices at once. Primary among these is the laptop, and there are 10 adaptors covering the most popular laptop manufacturers. Kensington guarantees compatibility and the laptops we tested didn't have any problems, though we can't vouch for more obscure or older ones. The other two charge ports are micro USB and standard USB 2.0. These offer more flexibility over what you can charge, with an adaptor for the micro USB port that turns it into another standard USB port. If you have a laptop and a few devices to charge, then this is a handy solution.

★★★★☆

Urbanista London

£49 (www.urbanista.com)

We weren't big fans of Urbanista's Copenhagen over-ear headphone set, but while that product didn't impress us, the smaller, cheaper London in-ear stereo headphones do. Keeping up with Urbanista's flair for design, the London headphones are available in a range of striking colours. Ours came in Crispy Apple green but there's also red, pink and the more standard black and white to choose from. Alongside the design, the 3.5mm headphones feature an integrated mic on the cord that works with your iPhone. The chunky buds are comfortable and work well at cancelling out ambient noise. They're plated with steel, which stops scuffs and marks developing and we were happy to discover there's a reassuring amount of volume to be had. A further nice touch is the packaging, which includes a cufflink box for storing the headphones when you don't need them.

★★★☆☆

WorldMags.net

StarTech.com USB 3.0 to HDMI External Video Card Multi-Monitor Adaptor

£63 (www.startech.com)

This is a basic external graphics card that transforms a USB 3.0 port into an HDMI output, letting you add a second monitor or HD TV to expand the desktop of your PC or laptop. When it comes to desktop PCs, the uses for this device are quite limited. Unless you have the most basic integrated graphics card, your PC should have two outputs for connecting multiple monitors. If you want to add a third monitor, however, then this is cheaper and easier than upgrading your graphics cards.

★★★☆☆

Buffalo AirStation Nfiniti N-Technology HighPower ADSL2+ Modem Router

Instant expert

£75 (www.buffalo-technology.com)

This router's headline feature is 'Nfiniti', which creates a number of bands that wireless devices can connect to without interference. Performance is superb, with two wireless N antennas ensuring that the range of the wireless network is wide and strong. Even with just the standard integrated wireless adaptor in our test laptop, the range easily trumped the results we got with the modem routers supplied by Sky and TalkTalk ISPs. Set-up is quick and straightforward, and if you have other Buffalo wireless devices, you can take advantage of the AOSS (AirStation One-Touch Secure System) button, which is a more secure version of WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access). You also get VPN support and built-in BitTorrent downloading.

★★★★☆

GeChic On-Lap 1301

£120 (www.gechic.com)

Multiple monitors are becoming an everyday need and GeChic is hoping to save you the hassle of setting up a standalone desktop monitor with the On-Lap 301 laptop external monitor. Suction cups attach the 1,366 x 768 13.3-inch TFT screen to the back of your laptop, facing upwards on a hinge. It plugs in via one of two signal cables (mini-VGA to D-Sub or mini-DVI to HDMI) and swings round when the laptop is open to give you acres of extra screen space. It's best used on a laptop with strong hinges and will make it significantly less portable. The 865g display isn't as crisp, bright or rich as a standalone screen, but the price is appealing and we found it more useful than we thought it would be.

★★★★★

Instant expert

Matt Hanson
Reviews editor

Dual-band Wi-Fi

More and more of our devices are using wireless networking, from laptops and tablets to games consoles and TVs. Add your neighbours' Wi-Fi networks and the wireless congestion starts to build up. Devices such as wireless mice and keyboards can also add to the confusion and make wireless connections weak and unstable. Dual-band routers are able to broadcast signals in the 5GHz band (802.11a) as well as the more common 2.4GHz band used by 802.11b/g/n. The advantage of this is that it allows more devices to connect to the network without interference from other wireless devices. If you find your wireless network is often unreliable and suspect noise from other wireless devices is the culprit, then a dual-band router – and if necessary a dual-band adaptor – will be a wise choice.

Worldmags.net

Buffalo AirStation N450 Wireless-N USB Adaptor

£35 (www.buffalo-technology.com)

This adaptor is a companion to the fantastic Buffalo AirStation N-Technology HighPower ADSL2+ Modem Router. Our test results were impressive – we were able to put three doors and a floor between our test laptop and the router before all signal was lost. Even our wireless-G-only router remained visible for further than the laptop's built-in receiver. Transfer speeds were great and HD movies streamed from a PC to a laptop in the same room without stuttering. This is a great investment if you want to give your network a boost. It's especially useful if you have a laptop that only has an old wireless-G integrated wireless adaptor. It does stick out a bit when it's plugged in though.

★★★★★

Kaspersky ONE Internet Security

£60 (www.kaspersky.co.uk)

Malware isn't just a problem for a single platform. With this in mind, Kaspersky ONE is designed to help users who need to protect several internet-connected devices. The comprehensive package includes the company's well-regarded anti-malware software for Mac, Windows, Windows Mobile up to 6.5, Symbian 9.1 to 9.4, BlackBerry, and Android 1.5 to 2.3 (both phones and tablets).

The idea behind Kaspersky ONE is simple: you buy a subscription for either three machines (£60) or five (£80), and you can install the software on whatever mix of Macs, Windows, phones and tablets you want to protect. That could be a BlackBerry, two Windows PCs and a Windows tablet, or five Windows PCs, to give a couple of examples – it's entirely up to you. Overall, if you need anti-malware protection for a range of different platforms, Kaspersky ONE offers a solid product with good performance at a competitive price.

★★★★☆

Logitech Touch Lapdesk N600

£53 (www.logitech.com)

The Touch Lapdesk N600 is a good idea and works well, but the price for a larger touchpad and a heat-shielding design seems like a lot. Still, the white moulded rubber is certainly sturdy, and the same goes for the slide-out plastic touchpad with oversized buttons. Alongside the touchpad are four hotkeys for raising and lowering volume, muting it completely or launching your internet browser. The signal is wireless, sent through from a USB transmitter that plugs into your laptop.

The touchpad itself is very responsive and will help anyone struggling with pokey laptop touchpads. Unfortunately, the N600 has its flaws. The multi-touch gesturing is frustrating, and zooming in and out on maps is a hit-and-miss affair. It also runs on four AAA batteries, which is not only a little outdated, but expensive compared with a USB charging option.

★★☆☆☆

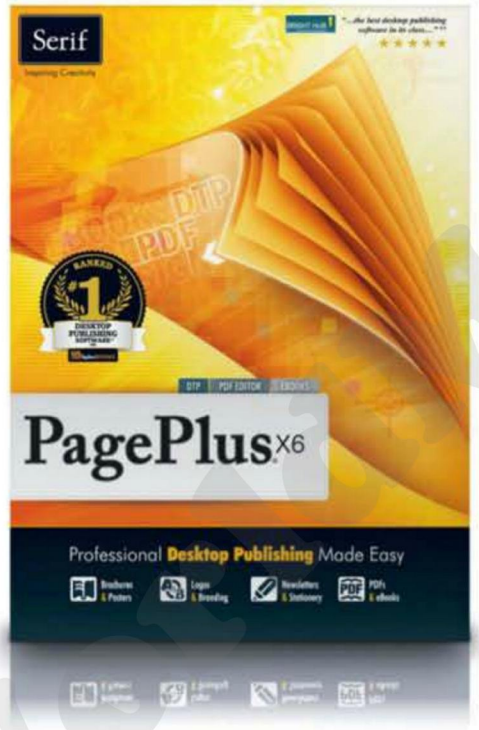
WorldMagazines

iStorage
Datashur Secure 8GB USB Flash Drive

£59 (www.istorage-uk.com)

Government ministers take note: iStorage has released what is quite possibly the most secure USB stick known to man. As you can see from the raft of buttons down the side, this flash drive is PIN protected. Simply enter your PIN (between seven and 15 digits) to unlock the drive, then attach it to your laptop like any other USB key and it locks itself automatically when unplugged, keeping your data safe from prying eyes.

The drive features military grade 256-bit encryption that keeps your sensitive files secure, while the casing itself is dust and water resistant. Finally, there's a Drive Reset feature that destroys all the data on board. You'll pay extra for the security – it's £39 for 4GB, £59 for 8GB and £79 for 16GB – but if you want to keep documents protected on the move, this is the USB equivalent of Fort Knox.



Serif
Page Plus X6

£82 (www.serif.com)

The latest offering from UK developer Serif contains traditional desktop publishing tools, as well as a PDF and ebook editor, all carefully wrapped up in a well-thought out interface that should appeal to amateurs as much as the professionals the software is aimed at. The standard blank publication incorporates typical desktop publishing elements, such as swatches and layers – as well as over 2,500 templates and graphics that can be used in your publication.

All your usual texts, effects and projects are available, and you can use the tools provided to edit photos and logos. Serif's Page Plus software has been going for years now and successfully condenses a lot of options into an easy to navigate program. We think £82 is a substantial investment given the number of free tools available on the internet, but this is a great package that gives you everything in one place.

Devolo
dLAN 500 AVtriple+

£121 (www.devolo.com)

The key difference between the Devolo dLAN 500 AVtriple+ and the Devolo dLAN 500 AVplus (along with a lot of its other competitors) is that one adaptor comes with three 1GB/s Ethernet ports, which turns it into a very speedy networking switch. It also allows you to connect three wired devices rather than one, eliminating the need to buy extra adaptors. We tested the Devolo dLAN 500 AVtriple+ with a number of wired devices linked up on one end and a router connected on the other. Each device was able to see and stream to the others, and they all had access to the internet via the router.

The Devolo dLAN 500 AVtriple+ is compatible with older powerline routers, though transfer speeds are affected. But it comes at a price – this is certainly one of the most expensive powerline adaptors you can buy.

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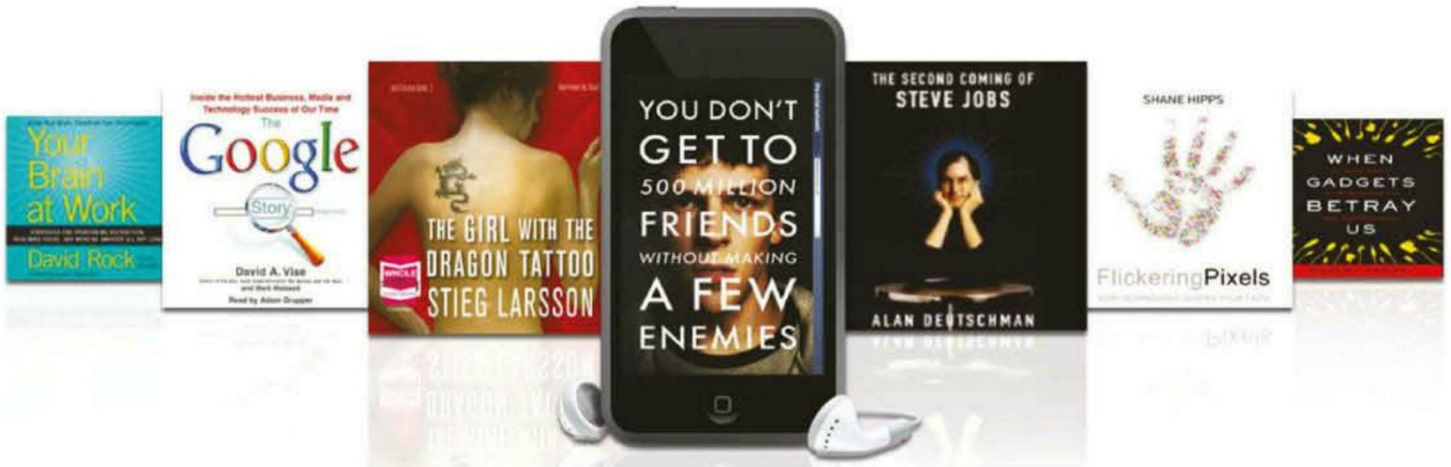

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Explore

WINDOWS TIPS ▶ INTERNET ADVICE ▶ YOUR DISC SOFTWARE

Welcome

This month's Explore section brings you yet another excellent selection of easy-to-follow tutorials. Whether you want to keep your computer and data safe, take control of your passwords or have fun finding new music online, we're here to show you how with our jargon-free step-by-step guides. And if all that means you're spending too much time sitting in solitude at your PC, we also have social networking tutorials to help you stay in touch with your friends.

If there's anything else you'd like to see covered in a future issue, please drop me a line.

Adam Ifans Editor-in-chief
adam.ifans@futurenet.com

Full listing...

50 Use your iPhone as a hard drive

54 Customise your Facebook Timeline

58 Remotely access a PC with Soluto

62 Keep your PC secure and threat-free

64 Organise your online social life

70 Discover new music online with Freemake Music Box

74 Create a master password with KeePass

78 Create and share files with SkyDrive

Your guide Henry Winchester says...

"When it comes to online files, things get a bit more complicated. Microsoft's SkyDrive makes uploading, sharing and downloading documents a doddle."

Turn to page 78 for more

Our promise to you...

Get more from Windows, software and all your favourite sites

Packed with informative tutorials

Every issue, we guarantee to pack the magazine with great tutorials teaching you all the best things you can do with your PC. Each article features step-by-step instructions to make learning new skills fast and enjoyable.

Customise Windows to work your way

We all know how to do the basics but getting the most from Windows isn't always easy. Our official relationship with Microsoft gives you the very best tips and tricks for all versions of Windows.

Get more from your favourite websites

We all have our list of favourite sites but often we miss out on great features because they're difficult to use or hidden from sight. We'll show you how to do more online, for a more satisfying web life.

Use our full software to try new things

Our exclusive industry access enables us to pack your free disc with full commercial software. From speed-up and security software to superb photo apps, there's always something new to try on your PC.

Your free disc...

This issue's free disc is packed with full software, essential toolkits, apps and resources to help you get the most from your computer.

Look out for the badge (below) pointing to key files for the article you're reading.

On your disc

Install the free **Windows Live Essentials** suite from the Resources section.

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Learn how to...

Use your iPhone as a hard drive

Your guide Christian Hall *says...*

"iTunes doesn't make using your iOS device as a hard drive very easy, so load up iExplorer instead."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL

Anyone can do it
▶ Straightforward
Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN

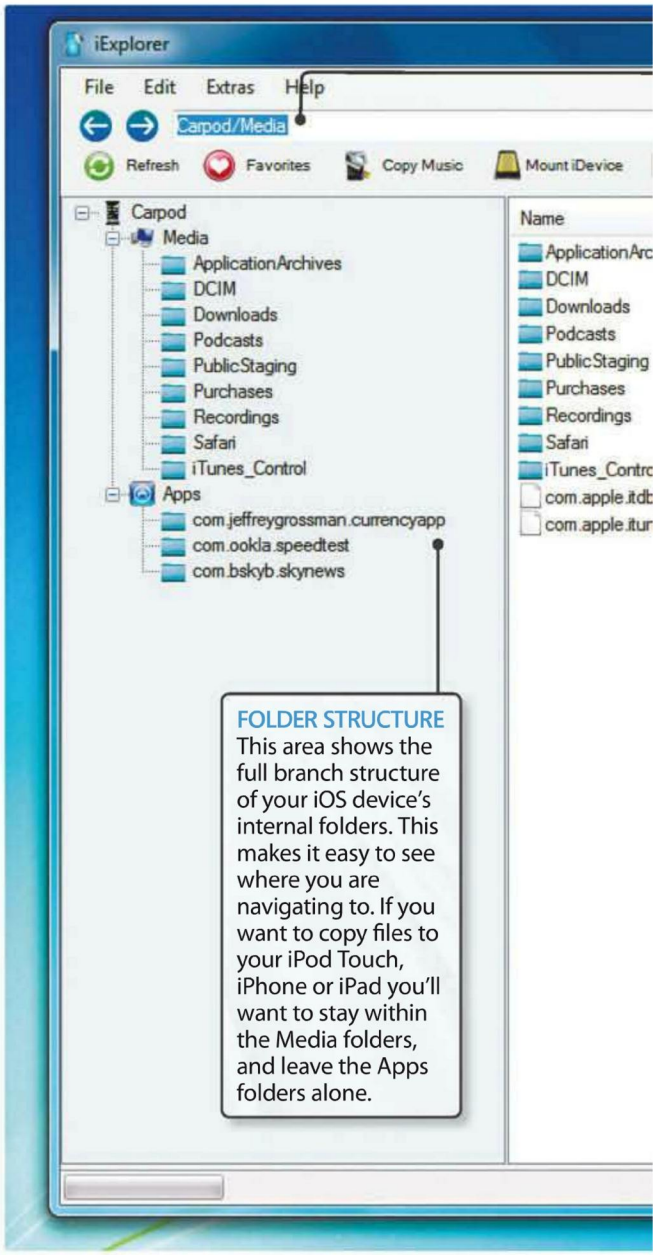
▶ 10 minutes

SUITABLE FOR

▶ Windows 7
▶ Windows Vista
▶ Windows XP

iPod Touches, iPads and iPhones are great devices, and they are managed very well by iTunes for such media as music and video, but not for everything else. At the heart of your iOS device, there is flash-based storage and this will have a capacity of between 8GB and 64GB (depending on which model you could afford) which means you can use it as a giant USB drive too.

iExplorer is a file browser that has been created to allow drag and drop-style actions on an iOS device. This is great for anyone that is used to copying files onto an external drive in Windows. But don't you lose your existing music, movies and photos if you use it as a hard disk? Certainly not – all of your existing files are preserved, and will be ready and waiting for you to use in iExplorer or, if you want to go back to using it for your media, in iTunes.



Step-by-step | Use your iOS device as an external hard drive

Setup - iExplorer
Welcome to the iExplorer Setup Wizard
This will install iExplorer 2.2.1.3 on your computer.
It is recommended that you close all other applications before continuing.
Click Next to continue, or Cancel to exit Setup.
iExplorer
by Macroplant
Next >
Cancel

1 Download and install

To get started with iExplorer, you will need to download the installer from the official site at www.macroplant.com/iexplorer. The download link on the right-hand side of the web page is for Windows users, so click it and follow the installation instructions. Choose 'Next', then select a location to install the program on the next screen.

2 .NET framework check

Our test machine was fully updated through Windows Update, but it was still missing a file from .NET framework 4.0 that was necessary for iExplorer to work. A screen will appear half way through the install process to ensure that this package gets onto your computer before the install finishes. Click 'Yes' to download and install the application.

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DEVICE PATH
This bar shows you the exact directory that you're looking at. It will begin with the name of your iOS device followed by Media or Apps, which are the two main folders on the device.

iEXPLORER ADDONS
The free application might not be able to do everything you want when you're using an iOS device as a hard drive, so click one of the options here for some advice on what apps you can move on to.

FOLDER DESTINATION
To the right of the branch structure is the actual destination folder area where you need to copy your files. Just drag them onto the white space here from another folder.

INFORMATION BAR
See how much of your iOS device's hard drive you've used up here. You can also check or uncheck 'Enable auto previews' for your files.

CHRISTIAN'S BEST TIP!
Like a USB pen drive, you can create, edit and delete documents on your iOS device with iExplorer.

Jargon buster!

iOS
The operating system for Apple's touch-based devices: iPod Touch, iPhone and iPad. The latest version is iOS 5.0.1.

Flash-based storage
Solid state memory with no moving parts, unlike traditional hard drives. The memory is fast, reliable and small in form factor, but is more expensive than disk-based storage.

File browser
A program that provides you with a visual breakdown of every file and folder on a drive, even if they are normally hidden from view when you're using the drive under normal conditions.

Microsoft .NET Framework 4 Setup
.NET Framework 4 Setup
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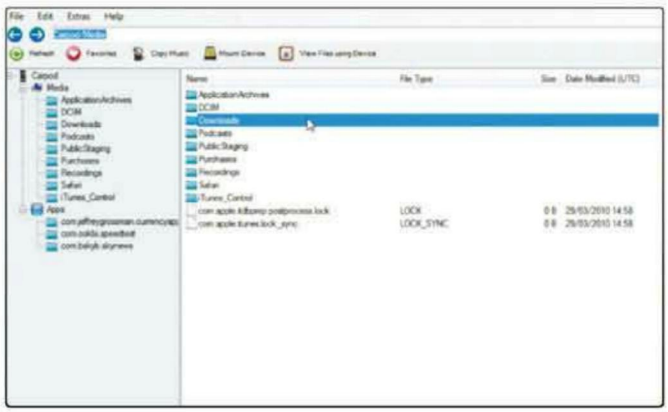

3 .NET install

The following screen is a wizard for the full .NET installation, which is required to complete the installation of iExplorer. You must agree to the licence terms before clicking 'Install'. The file is quite large, so you might want to put the kettle on! When it's finished, choose 'Next' and you'll be taken to the iExplorer interface for the first time.

4 Connect your iOS device

Now it's time to connect your iPod touch, iPhone or iPad. Don't worry if it opens up iTunes – just shut that program down, but don't eject your device from it because it will also eject it from iExplorer. The entire folder structure of your iOS device will be shown on iExplorer, which is something iTunes or Windows can't usually show you.

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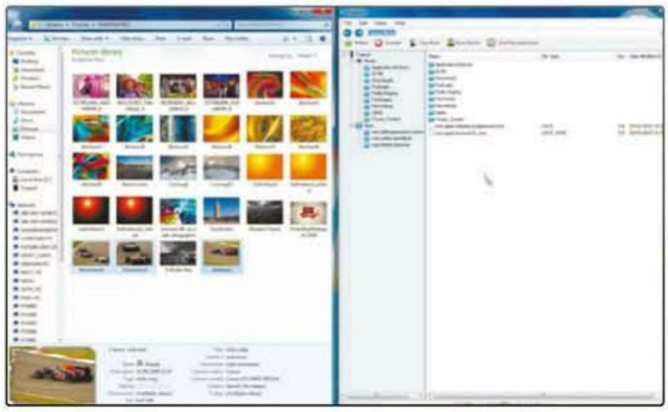


5 Copy photos

To copy an image onto to your iOS device, simply open up the folder that contains the image and drag it across to iExplorer. You can create a destination folder if you like, or just have it loose in the file system. In Windows 7 it's best to use the Snap feature to see two windows side-by-side.

6 File preview

When a photo is copied across to iExplorer you can view a thumbnail of it within the program. Click on the name of the file in iExplorer and a new window will open showing your image. There's a checkbox that lets you scale the image to fit the window, which is checked by default.

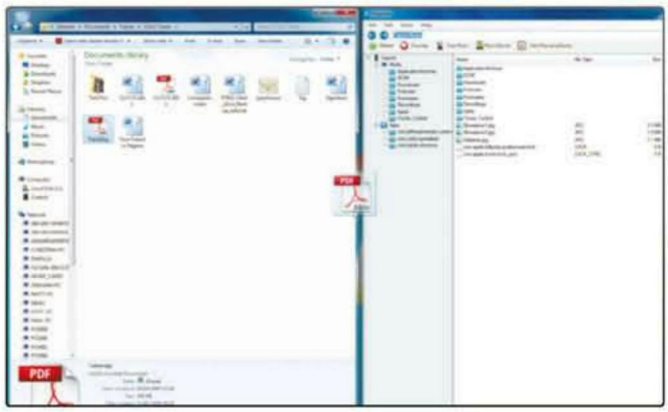
Preferences
Max Allowed Preview Size (MB): 10
Update preview only after double click
Allow access to "real-root" if iPhone is jailbroken. (Please note: in many cases this may also require the afc2add app installed on the device).
Write Event Log file to Windows Desktop
Show Hidden Files and Folders
OK
Cancel
3.3 MB
1.5 MB
1.7 MB
0 B
0 B

7 iExplorer Preferences

If some images don't show up when you try to preview them, it's because the file size is too big. This can be changed in 'Edit > Preferences'. Just change the Max Allowed Preview Size from 10MB to something like 25MB. For full access to your device, make sure 'Show hidden files and folders' is checked.

8 Send To shortcuts

iExplorer also adds a Send To entry in the context menu when you right-click on a file. This means you can send a file to your iOS device without having two folders open to copy something across. The entry in the context menu will say the name of your device rather than iExplorer.



9 Copy other files

Photographs aren't the only things you can copy across to an iPod Touch, iPhone or iPad though – it works for anything. Here we're copying a PDF document from Windows to our iPod Touch. The preview doesn't work for all documents though, so bear that in mind.

Awesome Files
Awesome Files is a file viewing app for your iOS device that we created to partner with iExplorer.
iExplorer provides you with the easiest way to get files on and off your device. And now there's Awesome Files which offers the best way to view and manage those files from the device itself. After installing Awesome Files on your iOS device, simply drag files on and off the folder "/Apps/com.macroplant.AwesomeFiles/Documents/"
Close

10 Take iExplorer further

You've learned how to copy files to your iOS device and use it like a USB drive, but you can take file browsing further with other iExplorer applications. Click 'View files using device' and a screen will pop up introducing you to Awesome Files, an app for better managing your files on your iOS device itself. ■

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Windows The Official Magazine

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Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW
Tel: 01225 442244 **Fax:** 01225 732275
Email: windowsmagazine@futurenet.com
Web: www.officialwindowsmagazine.com

EDITORIAL
Editor-in-chief Adam Ifans
Deputy editor Nick Odantzis
Reviews editor Matt Hanson
New media editor Simon Arblaster

ART/PRODUCTION
Managing art editor Matt Orton
Art editors Paul Blachford, Fraser McDermott
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Operations editors Cat Hackforth, Chris Thornett

CONTRIBUTORS
Editorial Joanna Bawa, Richard Cobbett, Alex Cox, Rachael D'Cruze, Dan Grabham, Christian Hall, Matt Hanson, Karl Hodge, Nick Peers, James Stables, Henry Winchester
Design Nick Aspell, Seth Singh
Photography Leanne Porter (Gingersnap Models), Ami Penfold (hair and make-up), Joby Sessions (cover), Thinkstock.com, iStockphoto.com, Gettyimages.com
Production Katharine Davies, Rhian Drinkwater, Damian Hall
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SENIOR MANAGEMENT
Group art editor Steve Gotobed
Group senior editor Paul Newman
Publisher Ian Robson
Group publishing director Nial Ferguson
Creative director Bob Abbott
Editorial director Jim Douglas

ADVERTISING
Advertising director malcolm.stoodley@futurenet.com
Advertising sales director james.ranson@futurenet.com
Advertising sales manager ashley.snell@futurenet.com
Senior advertising manager charlie.said@futurenet.com
Account manager robert.williams@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive michael.carrington@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive gemma.obrien@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive julian.tozer@futurenet.com
Sales executive lucie.gillespie@futurenet.com

CIRCULATION AND MARKETING
Group marketing manager philippa.newman@futurenet.com
Trade marketing manager colin.hornby@futurenet.com

PRINT PRODUCTION
Production controller marie.quilter@futurenet.com
Logistics manager mark.constance@futurenet.com
Ad production coordinator nola.cokely@futurenet.com

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING
International licensing manager regina.erak@futurenet.com

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Chief Executive Mark Wood
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Tel +44 (0)207 042 4000 (London)
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Learn how to...

Customise Timeline

Your guide Tamsin Oxford says...

"Timeline is an exciting new addition to Facebook that tells the whole story of your life."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL

- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN

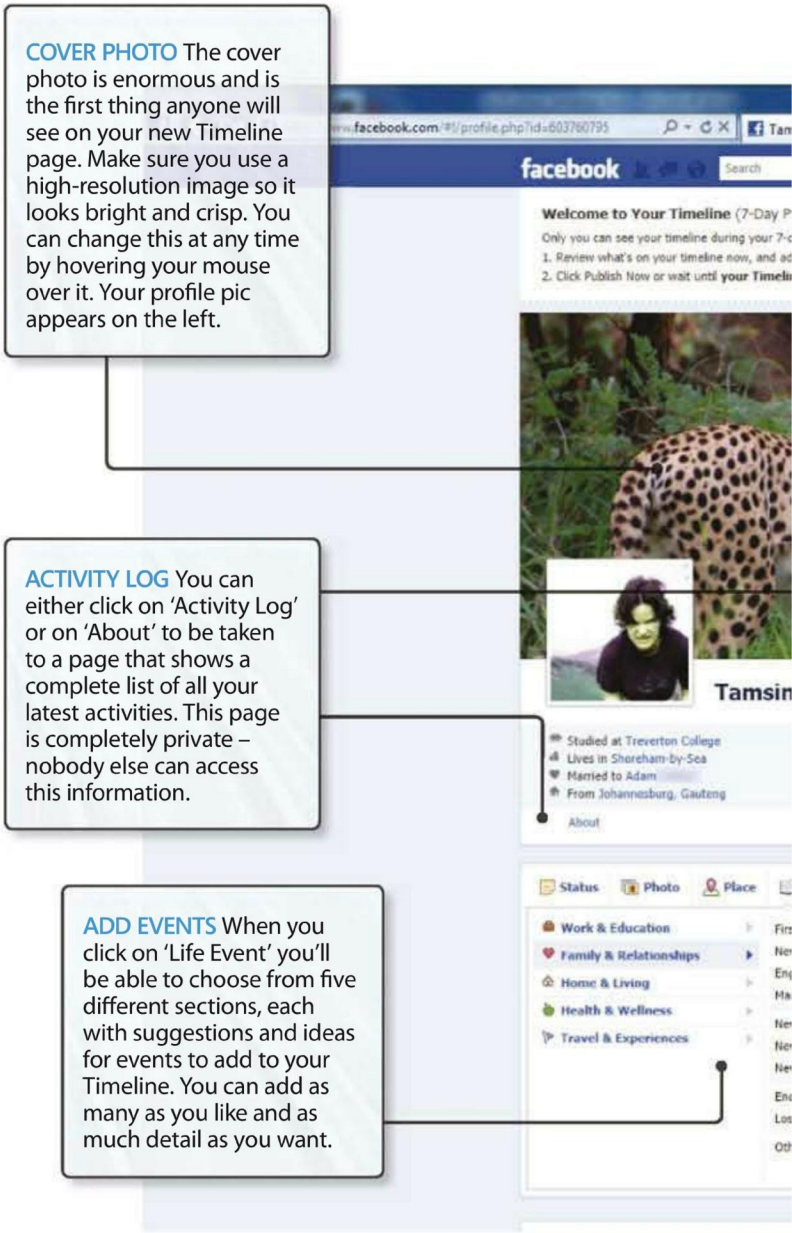
- 1 hour

SUITABLE FOR

- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

Facebook's latest feature, Timeline, will transform your profile page into something more like a personal movie or epic book. The new layout gives you the chance to unleash your creative talents and you get to view your past images, notes, special moments and Status Updates in one continuous stream. From here you can see what you were thinking, doing and saying as far back as when you first joined Facebook. The entire feature is geared towards showing you your memories in a stunning visual format that will last for years.

It's also a lot of fun to set up and manage, but once you've chosen to go ahead and install it, there's no undo option and you have to complete it in seven days before Facebook makes it live to the public. To get set-up with Timeline just go to www.facebook.com/about/timeline and click on 'Get Timeline'.


COVER PHOTO The cover photo is enormous and is the first thing anyone will see on your new Timeline page. Make sure you use a high-resolution image so it looks bright and crisp. You can change this at any time by hovering your mouse over it. Your profile pic appears on the left.
ACTIVITY LOG You can either click on 'Activity Log' or on 'About' to be taken to a page that shows a complete list of all your latest activities. This page is completely private – nobody else can access this information.
ADD EVENTS When you click on 'Life Event' you'll be able to choose from five different sections, each with suggestions and ideas for events to add to your Timeline. You can add as many as you like and as much detail as you want.
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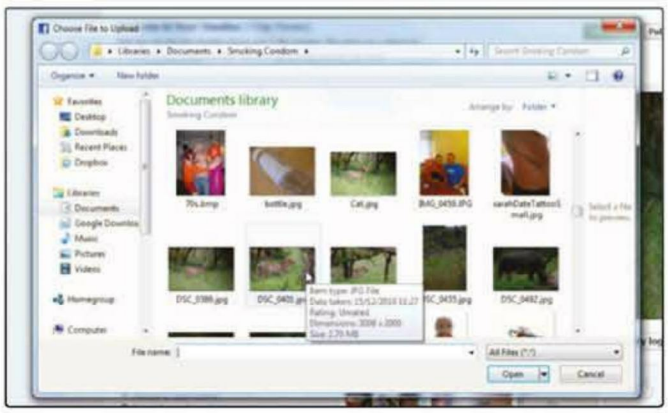
Step-by-step | Transform your profile page with Timeline



1 Pick a cover

Once you've installed Timeline, you'll be taken to your profile where you'll see a big space at the top. This is for your cover photo, which you can select yourself. The size of your cover is 851 x 315 pixels so choose a high-res image that won't distort or stretch. Click on the 'Add a Cover' icon at the top of the page and choose to 'Upload a new image' or use one already in your Photos.

2 More information

Click on the 'Update Info' icon below the cover image. You'll be taken to your personal info page, which is far more detailed now you're using Timeline. You can add in History by year, where you're living, your work and education details, and more. This information will be used by Facebook for advertising purposes, so keep it minimal if that bothers you.

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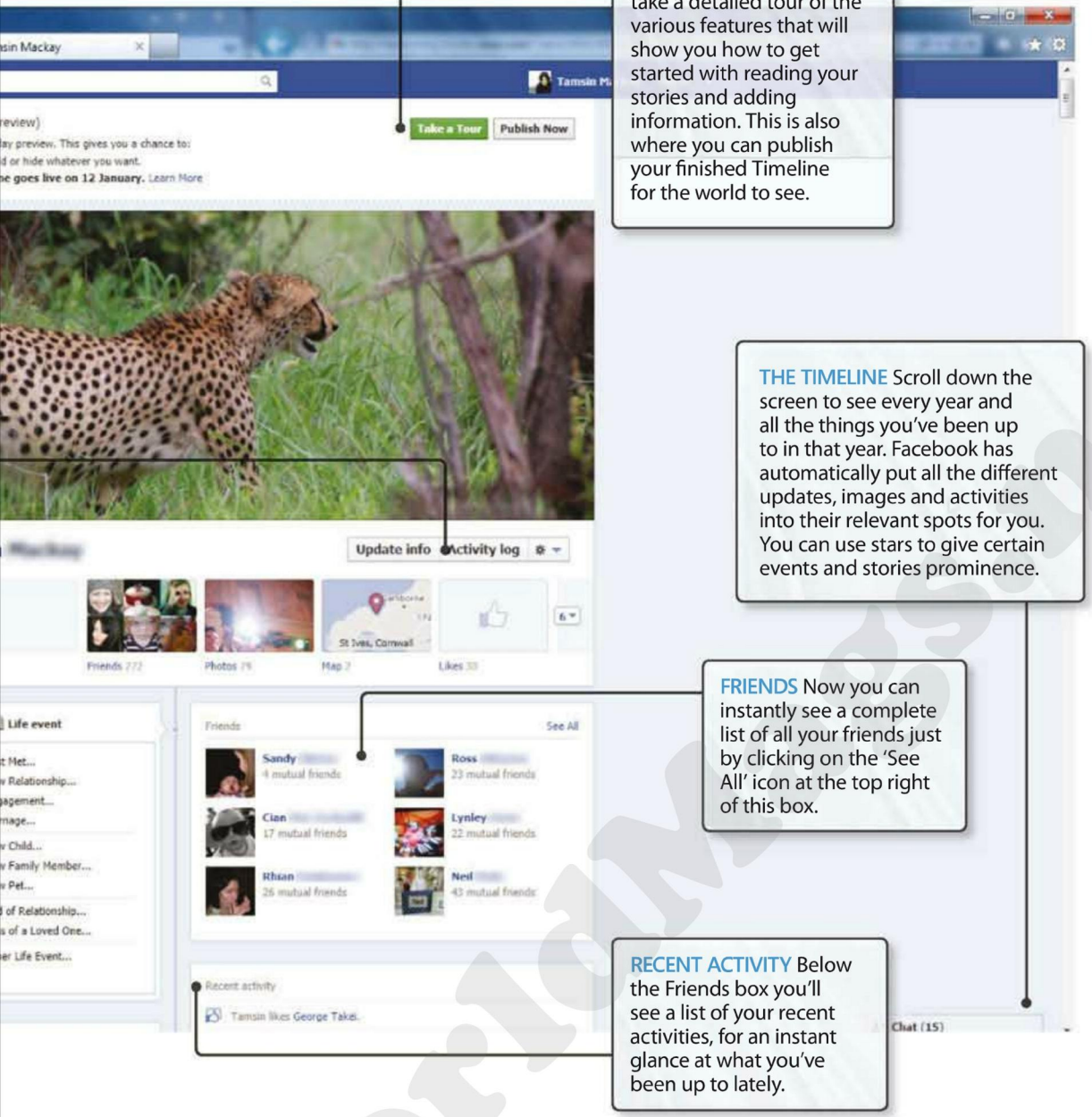


TAKE A TOUR When you first get Timeline you can take a detailed tour of the various features that will show you how to get started with reading your stories and adding information. This is also where you can publish your finished Timeline for the world to see.

THE TIMELINE Scroll down the screen to see every year and all the things you've been up to in that year. Facebook has automatically put all the different updates, images and activities into their relevant spots for you. You can use stars to give certain events and stories prominence.

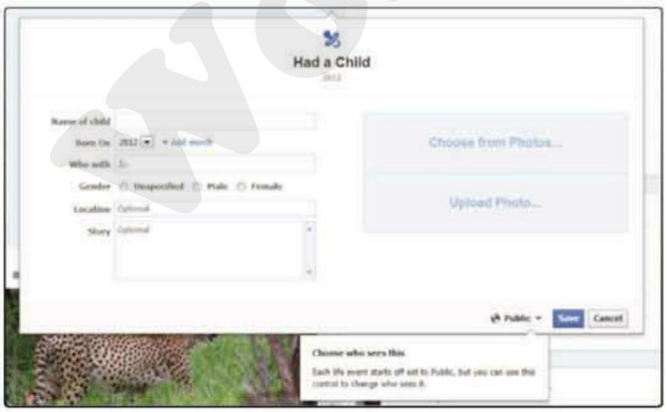
FRIENDS Now you can instantly see a complete list of all your friends just by clicking on the 'See All' icon at the top right of this box.

RECENT ACTIVITY Below the Friends box you'll see a list of your recent activities, for an instant glance at what you've been up to lately.

Jargon buster!

Profile page
Your personal page on Facebook. From here you can interact with friends, share information and add applications

Status Updates
If you make a post through the 'What's on your mind?' box at the top of the main interface, that's what's called a status update. It's designed to keep your friends on track with your comings and goings.



3 Life events

Back on your profile page, on the left-hand side you'll see a column with four headings: Status, Photo, Place and Life Event. Click on Live Event. Here you can fill in information about important events in your life that will get priority on your Timeline. These can be anything from the birth of your child to passing your exams.

4 Privacy controls

Congratulations, you've now customised your Facebook Timeline! Remember, everything you add to your Timeline can be made private by selecting the drop-down menu beside the Public icon. You can choose Friends, Custom or more specific options you've created. To keep your Timeline private, make sure you adjust these every time, since the default is Public. ■

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Adam

Adam Ifans, editor-in-chief
adam.ifans@futurenet.com

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Step-by-step | PowerMonkey Classic

1 FINDING THE RIGHT ADAPTOR

The PowerMonkey comes with a whole variety of adapters for different devices, such as phones, cameras or portable media players, so make sure you find the right one for yours.

2 CHARGING YOUR PORTABLE DEVICE

To begin charging your device, you need to connect the correct adapter to the charging cable that's built into the PowerMonkey, and then attach the adapter to your device.

3 RECHARGING THE POWERMONKEY

The PowerMonkey can supply you with around 5 to 50 hours' charge for your device, depending on what it is. When it needs recharging, plug in the power adapter and connect it to a mains supply.

4 STOWING IT WHEN OUT AND ABOUT

On your travels, the PowerMonkey is invaluable, so be sure to keep it handy in your pocket or a bag. But be careful not to get it dirty or damaged – keep it in its protective pouch at all times.

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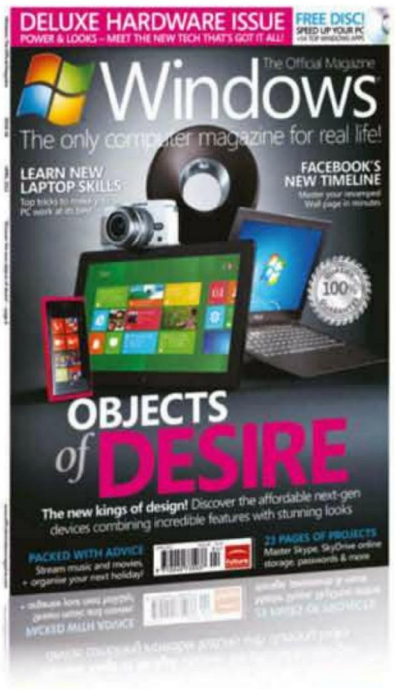
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Learn how to...

Remotely access a PC

Your guide Simon Arblaster says...

"Giving advice to family and friends about their PC problems over the phone isn't easy. Soluto can help."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL

Anyone can do it
▶ Straightforward
Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN

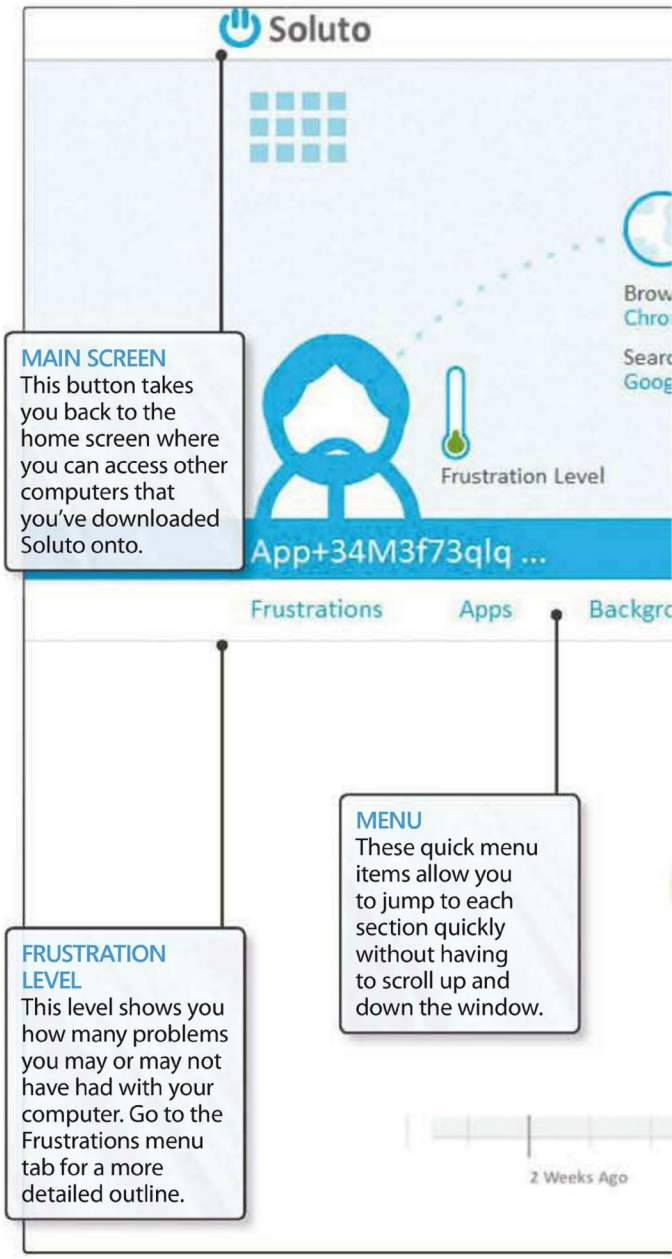
▶ 45 minutes

SUITABLE FOR

▶ Windows 7
▶ Windows Vista
▶ Windows XP

Getting a phone call from my mum isn't unusual, but to get a call asking me to help her fix her laptop was a bolt out of the blue. The surprise wasn't that she asked me, it was that I thought she never used her computer! I was wrong, but what she clearly hasn't ever done is taken the time to give her laptop a bit of TLC.

Her problem was that her PC was running really slowly and she was getting a message that 4oD couldn't complete its download. Instantly I knew her hard drive was full, but I wondered if it had a partition. Unfortunately, as soon as I started to ask her questions it was apparent that I was talking in another language. What I needed was a program that would give me access to my mum's laptop so I could fix the problem. It would also need to be something that she could use. The solution was a web-based service called Soluto.


Soluto
MAIN SCREEN
This button takes you back to the home screen where you can access other computers that you've downloaded Soluto onto.
Frustration Level
App+34M3f73qlq ...
Frustrations
Apps
MENU
These quick menu items allow you to jump to each section quickly without having to scroll up and down the window.
FRUSTRATION LEVEL
This level shows you how many problems you may or may not have had with your computer. Go to the Frustrations menu tab for a more detailed outline.
2 Weeks Ago

Step-by-step Help others with their PC

1 Log in

The first step is to go to www.soluto.com. You'll need to sign up before you can use the service. If you have a Facebook account, you can sign in using the same details, and it's instant too. If you're not on Facebook then you can sign up using a valid email address. You'll need to activate your account by following the instructions received in the email.

2 Installation

The next step is to download and install the software to your PC. You can have up to five PCs listed here. Should you wish to have more you can contact Soluto who may be able to help you. It's also handy to name the PC, especially if you have multiple computers. Now click 'Download to this PC'. Soluto will take a few minutes to download and install.

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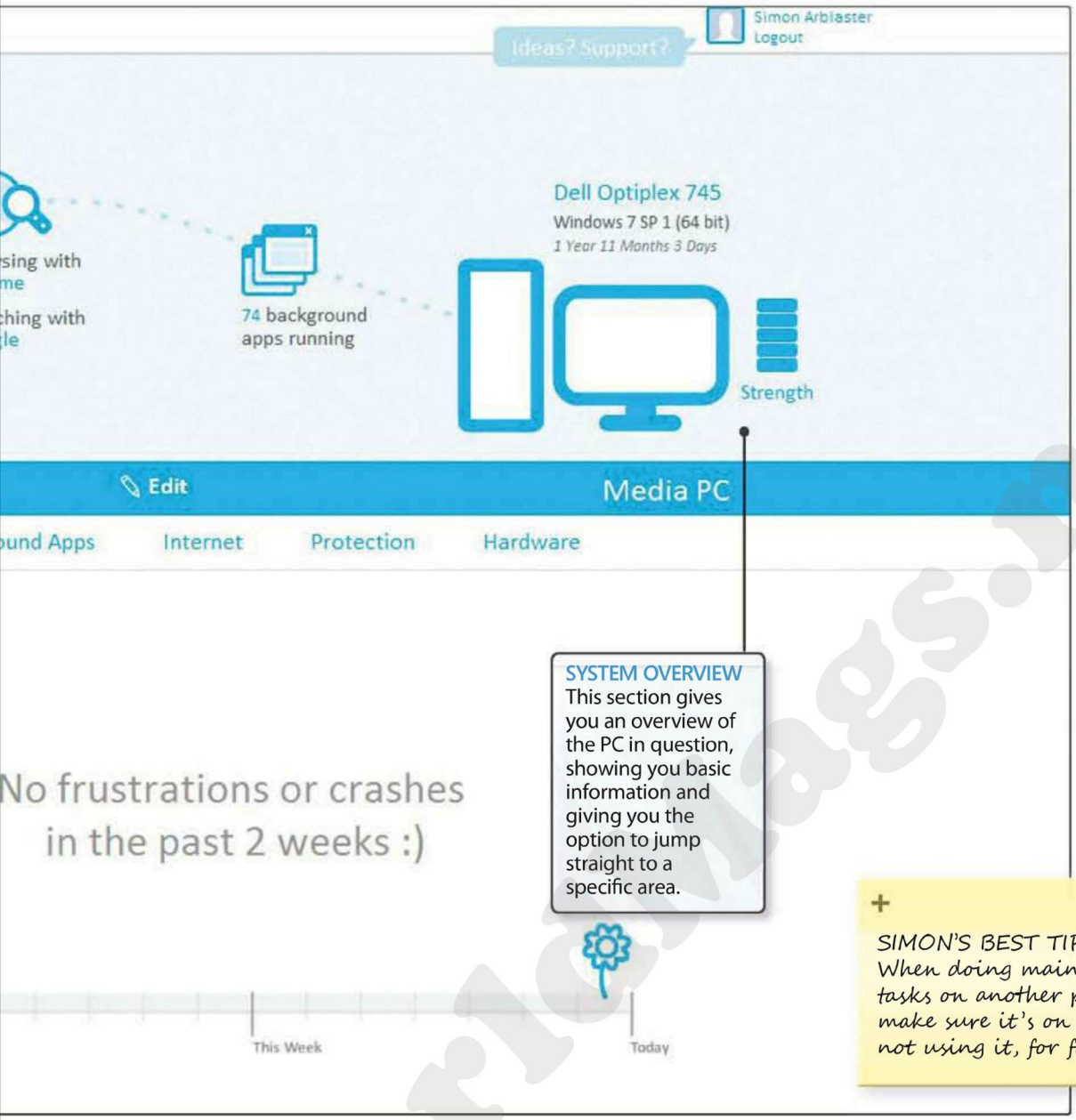
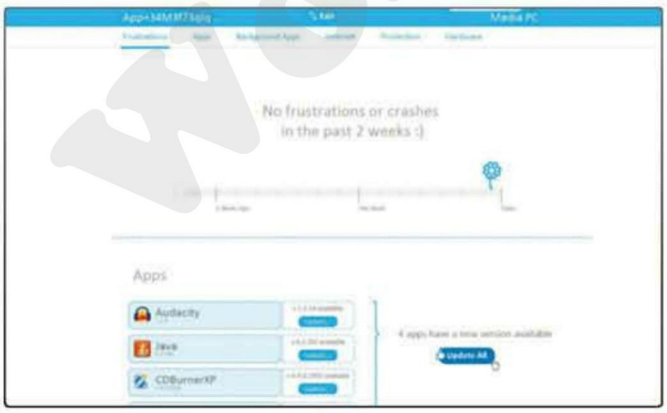

Simon Arblaster
Logout
Ideas? Support?
Dell Optiplex 745
Windows 7 SP 1 (64 bit)
1 Year 11 Months 3 Days
74 background apps running
Strength
Edit
Media PC
Internet
Protection
Hardware
No frustrations or crashes in the past 2 weeks :)
This Week
Today
SYSTEM OVERVIEW
This section gives you an overview of the PC in question, showing you basic information and giving you the option to jump straight to a specific area.
SIMON'S BEST TIP!
When doing maintenance tasks on another person's PC, make sure it's on and they're not using it, for faster results.

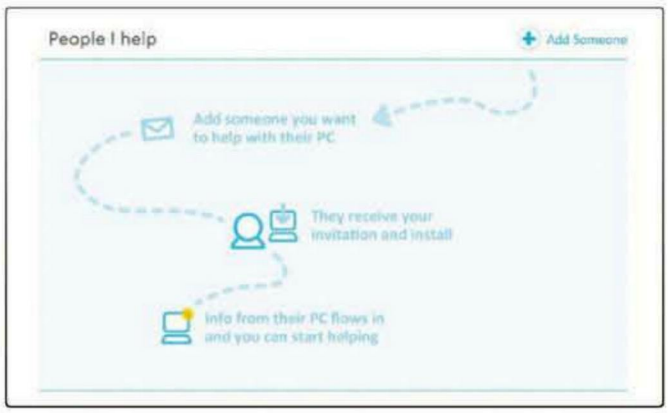
Jargon buster!

Defragmented
Files on your hard drive become fragmented when moved, or programs are installed/removed. Defragmenting the drive reunites the files together, making it easier to read them.

Junk mail
Emails from untrusted sources, especially from non-contacts, can end up in your junk email folder. Be sure to check it regularly just in case.

Facebook
The largest social networking site ever. Reunite with old friends, or make new ones, share photos and videos and even play games. If you haven't heard about Facebook then you've been away for a long time!




People I help
Add Someone
Add someone you want to help with their PC
They receive your invitation and install
Info from their PC flows in and you can start helping

3 Overview

Soluto's interface is very simple and will be the same across any other computer you use. Each machine is divided up into six main areas. These include tools to help you delay programs that start when you turn on your PC and find out of date programs and any potential problems with your machine. On top of this you get an overview of your PC's performance in a handy timeline.

4 Help someone

To start helping a friend or relative, go back to your account's main page by clicking on the Soluto logo at the top of the page. Below the area that shows you a list of your computers, you'll see a 'People I help' window. Click on the 'Add someone' button on the right-hand side and enter their email address into the field provided.

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5 Personal message

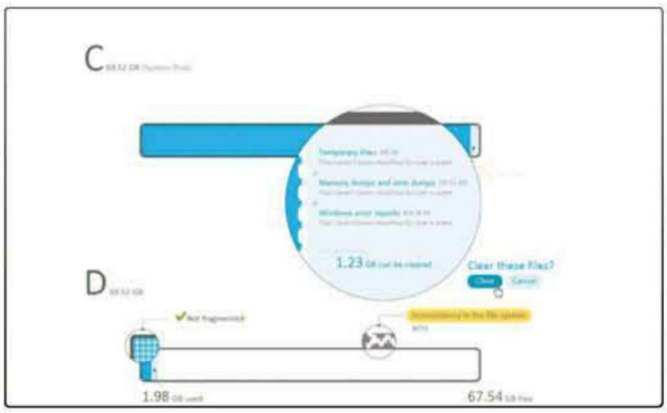
Click the 'Add this person' button. This will bring up a small window with a short message addressed to the person whose PC you want to access. You can edit the message should you wish to make it more personal, which may be a good idea just in case they mistake it for junk mail. Details are given within the email on what the recipient should do next.

6 Remote PC

Once your friend or family member has received the email and followed the instructions, they will be asked to download the software. It's recommended they contact you to verify that you are who you say you are, so expect an email or a phone call. This is the same program as installed in step 2, so there will be a short wait while the file is downloaded and installed.

7 Find the problem

Once the program has installed on their computer, it will show up in your account. If you're thinking about helping out more than one person then it would be wise to rename it just to make things clear. Click on the icon in the 'People I help' window to view the other person's PC. Any potential problems are outlined underneath their description.

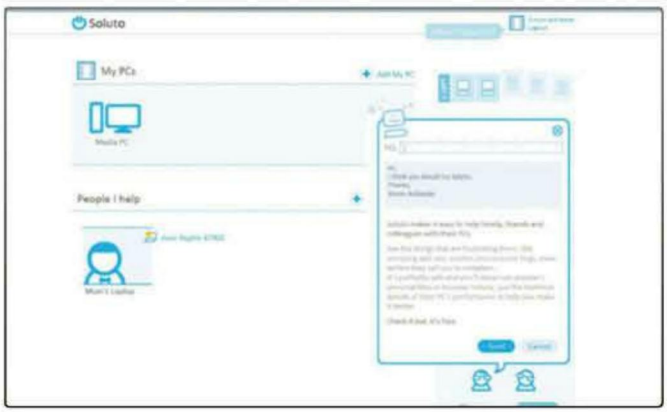


8 Not enough space

Clicking on the warning will take you to the relevant menu – in this case, Hardware. As the problem is a lack of free space on the primary hard drive, expand the 'Hard drives' option. Here I can see the problem isn't just a space shortage – the disk needs to be defragmented. Clicking 'Clear space…' will show a breakdown of all the unneeded files. To start the cleaning process hit 'Clear'.

9 The right time

The process may not start right away. This could be for a number of reasons such as the recipient's PC might be switched off or on standby. Another problem that can make your computer sluggish is the amount of applications that are running in the background. With Soluto you can pause or even delay a program that usually starts with Windows.



10 Reciprocate

Well done! You've completed a thorough clean-up of your friend's PC. The good news is, they can return the favour should you ever need help solving an issue with your computer. Once a connection has been made between two people they can each look after the other's machine. If you wish to spread the word then do so by sharing on Facebook or sending an email direct. ■

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NOW ON APPLE NEWSSTAND

Learn how to...

Keep your PC secure and threat-free

Your guide Simon Arblaster *says...*

"The ever evolving world of cyber-crime means you need to be up to date with all potential threats. Here I'll show you how to stay ahead of the game."

On your disc

You'll find **Personal Software Inspector** in the Resources section

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL

- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN

20 minutes

SUITABLE FOR

- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

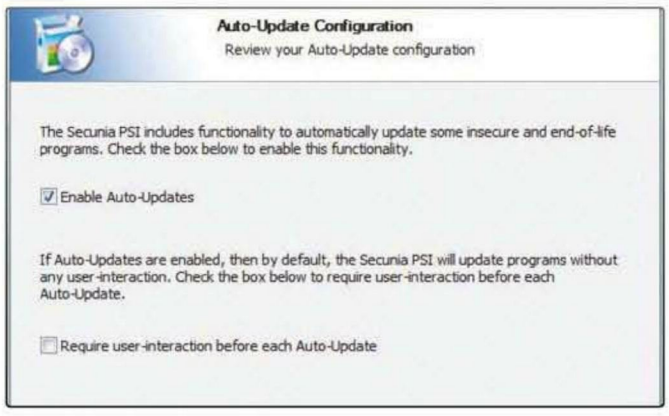
We all know that we need to keep our PCs secure to stave off attacks from criminals who want to steal our data. Antivirus programs and firewalls are the best lines of defence in home computing, but there are other ways you can help put off potential criminals.

One possible threat to your PC is insecure software. Most software you install on your computer will need regular updates, and security updates are among the most common. These are essential, as hackers can target outdated software on your PC and use it to gain access. Trying to update all of your programs will obviously take up a lot of your time. This is where Personal Software Inspector from Secunia comes in.

After realising the threat posed by out-of-date security **patches**, Secunia has created a way to scan all programs on your PC for security updates and download them for you.

SIMON'S BEST TIP!
If you can't see a program in the scan results then you can suggest it to Secunia as an addition to the master list.

Step-by-step | Update missing security patches


Auto-Update Configuration
Review your Auto-Update configuration
The Secunia PSI includes functionality to automatically update some insecure and end-of-life programs. Check the box below to enable this functionality.
Enable Auto-Updates
If Auto-Updates are enabled, then by default, the Secunia PSI will update programs without any user-interaction. Check the box below to require user-interaction before each Auto-Update.
Require user-interaction before each Auto-Update

Tray Icon Configuration
Review your Tray Icon configuration
The Secunia PSI includes a Tray Icon program that can be run by regular users, and provides notifications when scans complete or changes are detected.
It is possible to select the level of detail provided by the Tray Icon notifications.
When this setting is enabled, the Tray Icon notifications can include details about changes, such as the name of a program that has been installed or removed.
When this setting is disabled, the Tray Icon notifications will only show that a change has occurred, and whether a program was added or removed, but not the name of the program or any included files.
The full details are still available in the Secunia PSI.
Show full change information in tray icon notifications

1 Installation

First you need to install the program from the disc included with this magazine. Go to the Resources section to find Personal Software Inspector and click 'Install now'. You will asked a few questions. The first of these asks you if you want notifications to appear in your system tray. All this information can be found within the program anyway, so leaving the box unchecked is fine.

2 Auto-updates

Personal Software Inspector can update some insecure and **end-of-life** patches automatically. If you want the program to do this, tick the box If you would like to be warned before any updates, be sure to tick the box at the bottom of this screen. Much like User Account Control in Windows, you will be warned of any potential updates, giving you the option to proceed or not.

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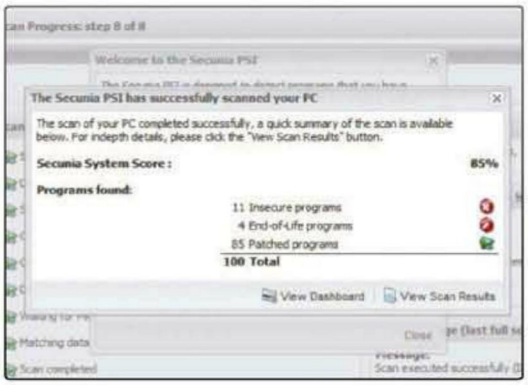
Welcome to the Secunia PSI
The Secunia PSI is designed to detect programs that you have installed on your PC and detect if any of them are missing critical security patches.
The first scan of your PC has been started in the background, a pop-up window will appear when the first scan results are ready.
After the scan finishes you can review the scan result on the "Scan Results" page. This page enables you to view the programs detected, as well as showing you if they are missing critical security patches.
Should you encounter any issues while using the Secunia PSI or when patching a specific program, we strongly encourage you to visit the Secunia Community Forum.
Close

3 First scan

Your first scan will run automatically once the installation has finished. This will only take a couple of minutes. First it detects all the programs that are installed on your PC, then determines whether any are missing security updates, or are no longer supported by the vendor (end-of-life).


The Secunia PSI has successfully scanned your PC
The scan of your PC completed successfully, a quick summary of the scan is available below. For indepth details, please click the "View Scan Results" button.
Secunia System Score: 85%
Programs found:
11 Insecure programs
4 End-of-Life programs
85 Patched programs
100 Total
View Dashboard
View Scan Results

4 Scan overview

After your first scan has completed, you will be greeted with a small pop-up screen. This gives you an overview of the scan results. To see these in full, click on the 'View scan results' button. From here you can also navigate your way back to the Dashboard and review the results at a later time.

Jargon buster!

Patches
A patch is also known as an update. In Personal Software Inspector, only security patches will be updated.

End-of-life
Programs that are no longer supported by the manufacturer.

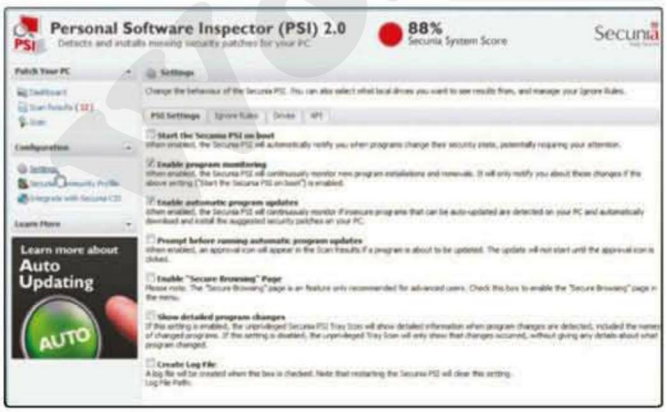
Microsoft Update
This tool lets you update your version of Windows and other important Microsoft services.

5 Scan results

You will notice on this screen that PSI has already started to update some the programs that are classed as insecure. Some of these programs cannot be updated automatically. This is most likely because the vendor has released a newer version of the software that requires manual installation.

6 Manual update

In the far right column you'll find the status and appropriate action for each program. Further down the list you can see a list of programs that are up to date and therefore need no further action. If something needs to be done, a blue button will appear labelled 'Install solution'. Clicking this button will direct you to the vendor's website to download the latest version of the update. Products from Microsoft might be covered by Microsoft Update. If so, there will be an option to launch Microsoft Update in the Install Solution column.



7 Configure settings

In the left-hand menu you will see the Configuration tab. Expand this to reveal the Settings option. Opening the Settings window will allow you to perform a few extra tasks. If you change your mind about automatic updates (as seen in step 2), you can change that setting here. Another feature you may want to switch off is the option to run Secunia PSI with Windows.

8 Dashboard

Once you're satisfied with the results and settings, go to the Dashboard to see an overview of Personal Software Inspector. This screen shows you the scan history, as well as the current system score. If you want to get involved further, Secunia offers a Community Profile where you can participate in upcoming events and forum discussions, or just get more help with the software. ■

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Learn how to...

Organise your online social life

Your guide Nick Peers says...

"Access all your social networking services – including Skype – from one application."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL

- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN

10 minutes

SUITABLE FOR

- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

If, like me, you have friends scattered across various social networks, you might find it tough keeping up with what's going on. It's not easy to fire up your instant-messaging tool, open various websites and then spend your time switching between them trying to juggle various ongoing conversations and updates.

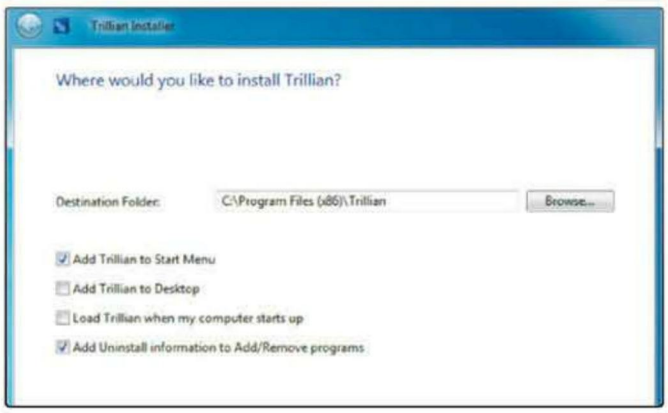
Trillian is a handy free application that lets you collate all your social media – including Twitter, Skype, Facebook and Windows Live – in one handy program. Now you don't have to keep logging into different sites or programs to stay up to date with what's going on and you can even chat with friends across multiple instant messaging networks from within one window.

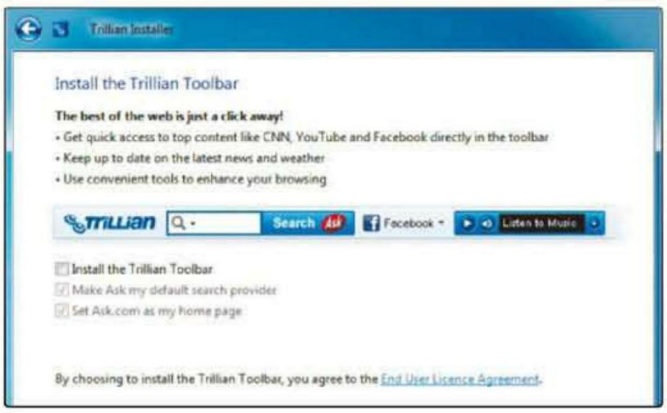
In this tutorial we will show you how to set up and use Trillian and customise its setup to your personal needs and tastes.

CHAT WINDOW
Just double-click on a contact's name in the main Trillian window to start chatting with them. The Chat Window can handle multiple conversations (each in its own tab) from different instant messaging networks, including Skype.

SOCIAL NETWORKS
Each social network can be viewed in its own window with options for leaving status messages, replying and commenting on your friends' statuses. You'll also find each window is tailored to the specific social network, so Twitter has a section for mentions, while Facebook lets you view messages.

Step-by-step | Set up and start using Trillian


Trillian Installer
Where would you like to install Trillian?
Destination Folder:
C:\Program Files (x86)\Trillian
Browse...
Add Trillian to Start Menu
Add Trillian to Desktop
Load Trillian when my computer starts up
Add Uninstall information to Add/Remove programs


Trillian Installer
Install the Trillian Toolbar
The best of the web is just a click away!
• Get quick access to top content like CNN, YouTube and Facebook directly in the toolbar
• Keep up to date on the latest news and weather
• Use convenient tools to enhance your browsing
TRILLIAN
Search
Facebook
Listen to Music
Install the Trillian Toolbar
Make Ask my default search provider
Set Ask.com as my home page
By choosing to install the Trillian Toolbar, you agree to the End User Licence Agreement.

1 Get started

Go to www.trillian.im and click the 'Download' link to save the Trillian installation file to your hard drive. Once the file is downloaded, open it to install the program. Click 'Agree', then choose your options (untick 'Load Trillian when my computer starts up' if you don't want it to start with Windows) before clicking 'Next'.

2 Finished installing

Trillian will offer to install another 'recommended' program provided by one of its sponsor – click 'No thanks' to decline the invitation. We also recommend not installing the browser toolbar – untick 'Install the Trillian Toolbar' when prompted. Click 'Next', wait for the program to install itself and click 'Launch' to finish and open Trillian.

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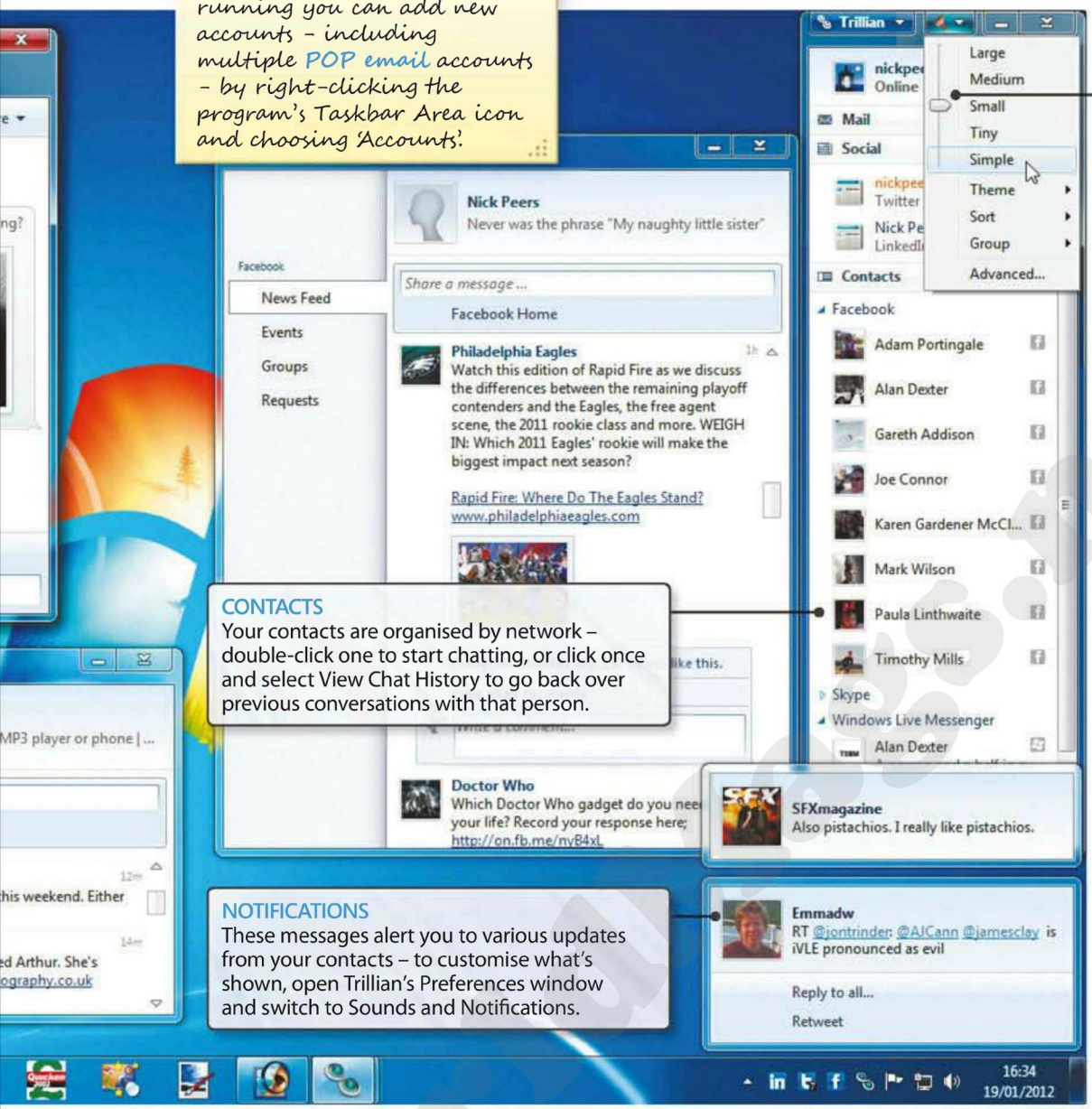
NICK'S BEST TIP!
Once Trillian is up and running you can add new accounts – including multiple POP email accounts – by right-clicking the program's Taskbar Area icon and choosing 'Accounts'.



CUSTOMISE WINDOW
Use the slider to fit more contacts and accounts in the Trillian window. You can change the program's colour scheme via the Theme menu, and choose the Sort and Group menus to quickly reorganise the Mail, Social and Contacts lists.

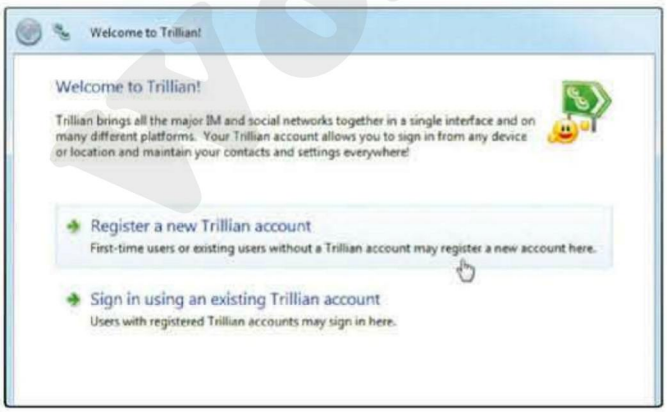
CONTACTS
Your contacts are organised by network – double-click one to start chatting, or click once and select View Chat History to go back over previous conversations with that person.

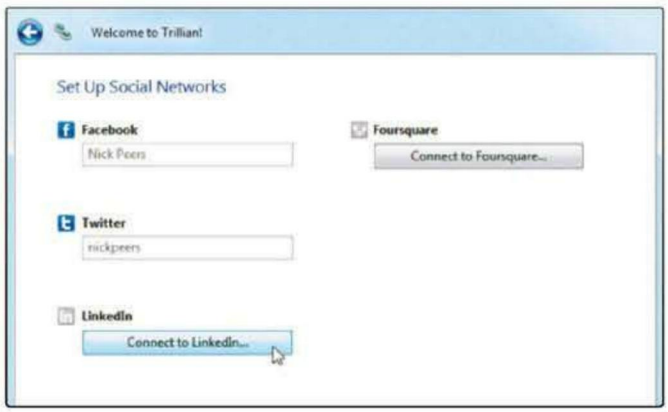
NOTIFICATIONS
These messages alert you to various updates from your contacts – to customise what's shown, open Trillian's Preferences window and switch to Sounds and Notifications.

Jargon buster!

Social media
A catch-all term for all online services that involve communication and sharing, including social networking services such as Facebook and chat services such as Skype and Windows Live Messenger.

POP email
POP (Post Office Protocol) is the most popular technology used to give people access to their email accounts via third-party programs such as Windows Live Mail or Microsoft Outlook.


Welcome to Trillian!
Welcome to Trillian!
Trillian brings all the major IM and social networks together in a single interface and on many different platforms. Your Trillian account allows you to sign in from any device or location and maintain your contacts and settings everywhere!
Register a new Trillian account
First-time users or existing users without a Trillian account may register a new account here.
Sign in using an existing Trillian account
Users with registered Trillian accounts may sign in here.



3 Register or sign in
You will need a free Trillian account to start using the program – click 'Register a new Trillian account' to set one up. You'll need to provide your email address, as well as choose a username, password and provide a security question, which you'll need to answer if you forget your password. Click 'Create account' when you've finished.

4 Add your social accounts
Next you'll be prompted to log into one of the instant messaging (IM) accounts that you use, including Windows Live Messenger, Skype and Yahoo!. Enter your username and password for each one, then click 'Next' to set up your social network accounts – click the appropriate 'Connect to' button for each one you use.

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Welcome to Trillian!
Set Up Mail
Trillian can connect to your IMAP and POP3 email accounts to notify you of new mail. If you've already configured AOL, Windows Live, Yahoo!, or Google Talk, your email notifications have already been set up.
Account type:
POP3
Email address:
wvm@support-pcs.co.uk
Username:
wvm+support-pcs.co.uk
Password:
Incoming mail server:
mail.support-pcs.co.uk
Port:
110

5 Configure email accounts

Trillian can also tell you when you get a new email. Email accounts linked to your social networks, such as Windows Live are already set up, but you can configure a POP3/SMTP mail account too. Get the details you need to enter from your email program's Account screen, or consult your Internet Service Provider. Click 'Done' when finished.

6 Start using Trillian

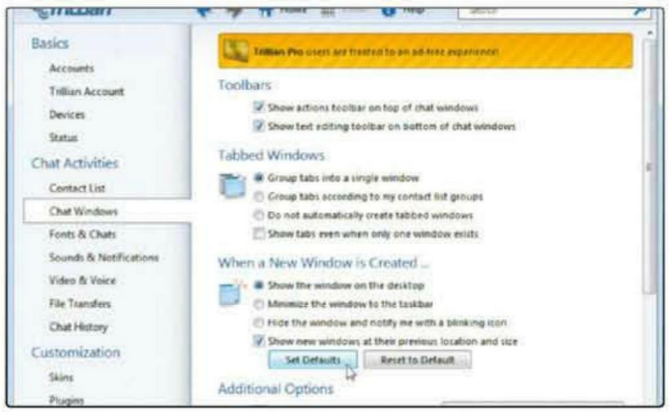
The Trillian application will now launch and configure your accounts before opening its main window, which sits on the right-hand edge of the screen. Click the 'Start!' button and you'll see all your email, networks and contacts listed. By rolling your mouse over an entry this will reveal a pop-up window telling you more about it.

7 Stay in touch

Pop-up notifications will appear alerting you to new tweets, Skype messages and Facebook status messages, and whether or not your contacts have appeared online. You can respond to each notification by clicking the appropriate option next to the pop-up, like replying to a tweet or starting a chat with someone who's just come online.

8 Chat with friends

By default, Trillian will display all contacts who are currently online and therefore available to contact. Click a name to open a chat window and you can start chatting with that person. Depending on the network you're using, you'll be able to send files, share pictures and even take part in voice chats. Check the window to see what options are available.



9 Tweak preferences

You'll see two clickable buttons at the top of the main Trillian window. Clicking them will reveal all the options that available for customising the program. Choose 'Preferences' from the Trillian menu and then work your way through the various options, setting up the program so it works exactly the way you want it to.

10 All your networks in one place

You're now in the enviable position of being able to view and manage your online social life from one convenient application. You can also install a Trillian app on your iPhone, Android mobile or Blackberry, and access your account through any web browser for chat purposes, ensuring you stay in touch wherever you go. ■

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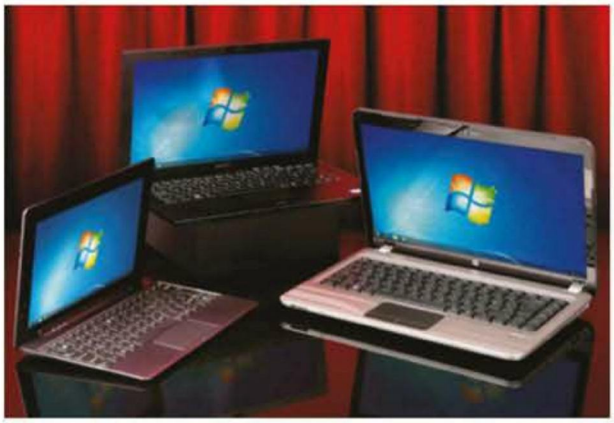

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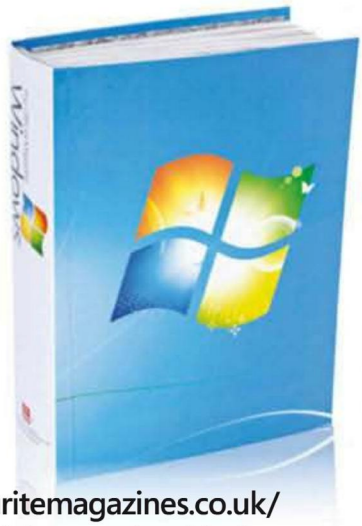

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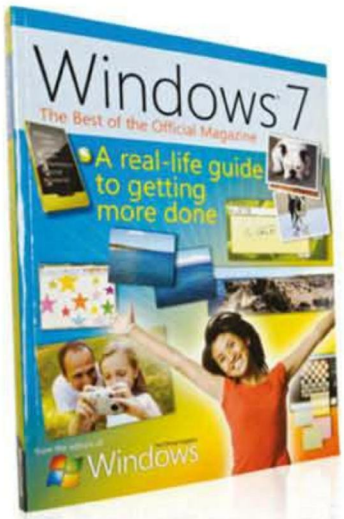

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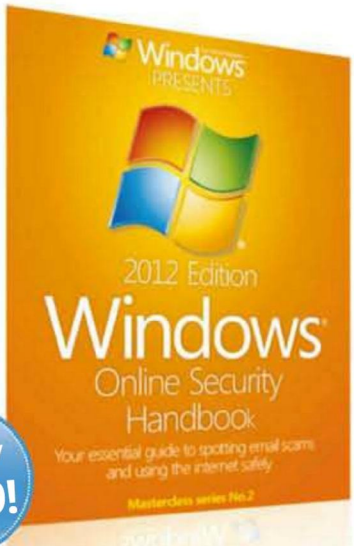

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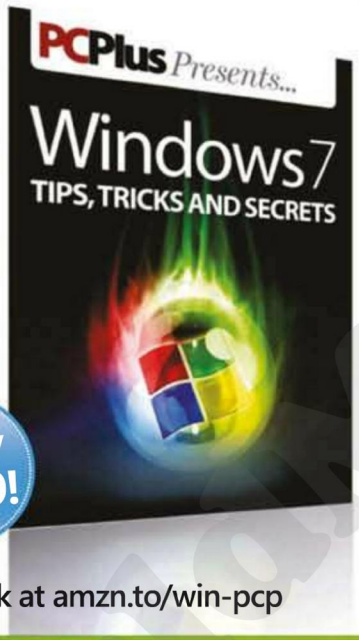

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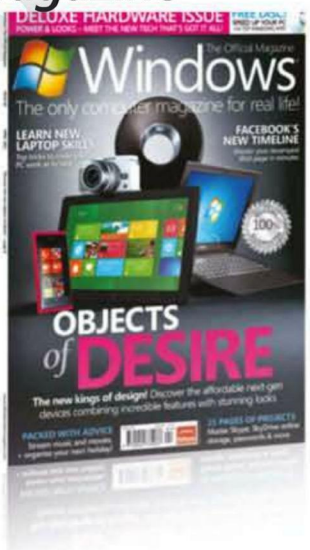

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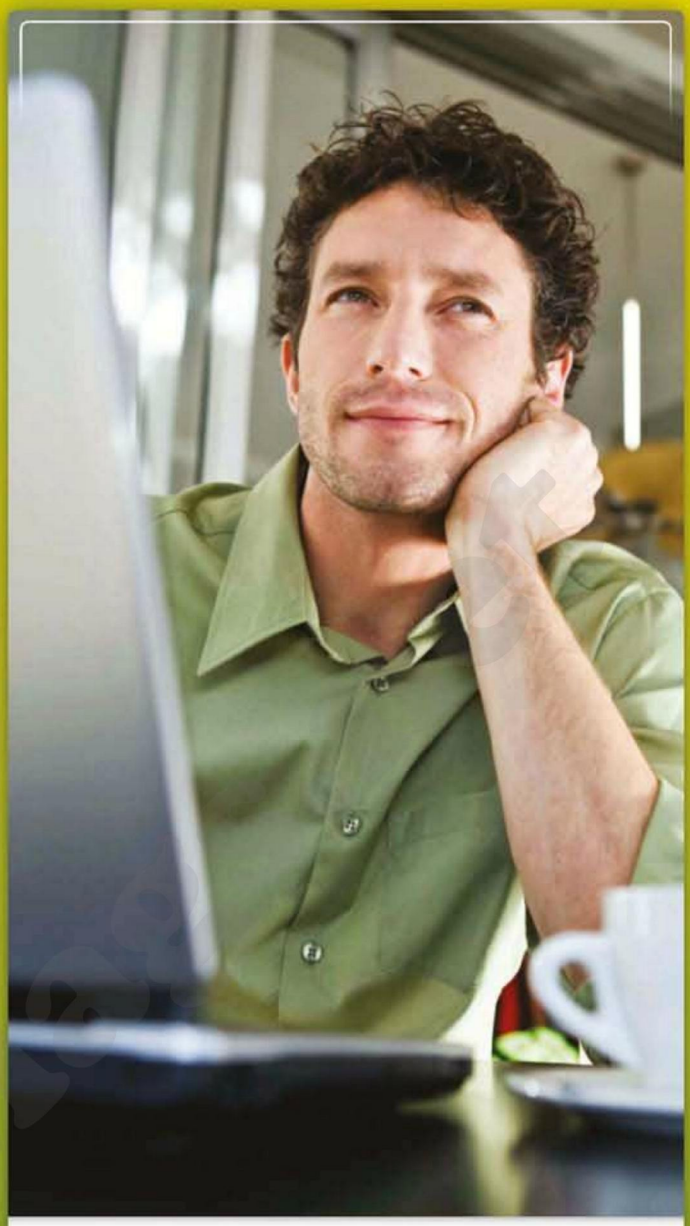

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Learn how to...

Discover new music online

Your guide Dan Grabham says...

"Explore online music as much as you like with Freemake Music Box – and what's more, it's free."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL

Anyone can do it
▶ Straightforward
Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN

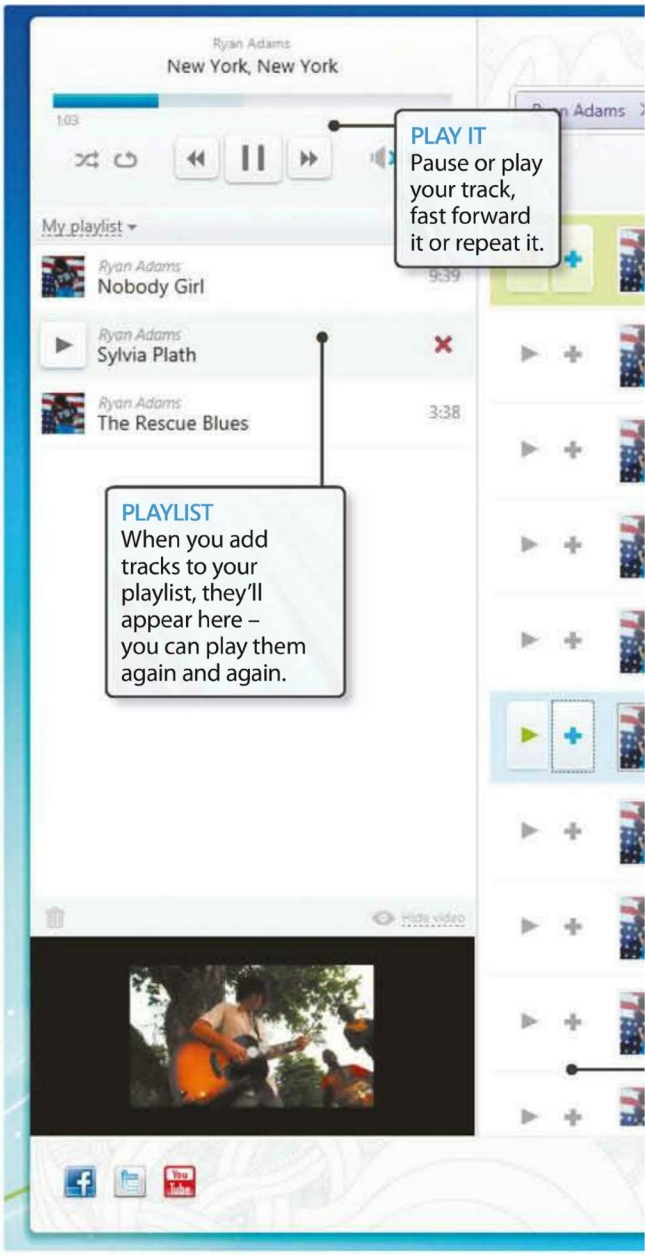
▶ 15 minutes

SUITABLE FOR

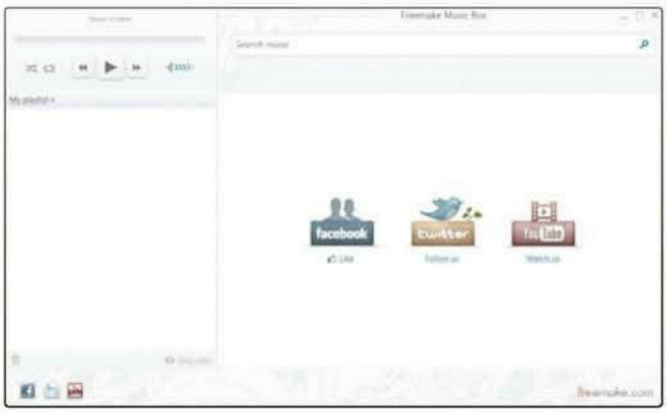
- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

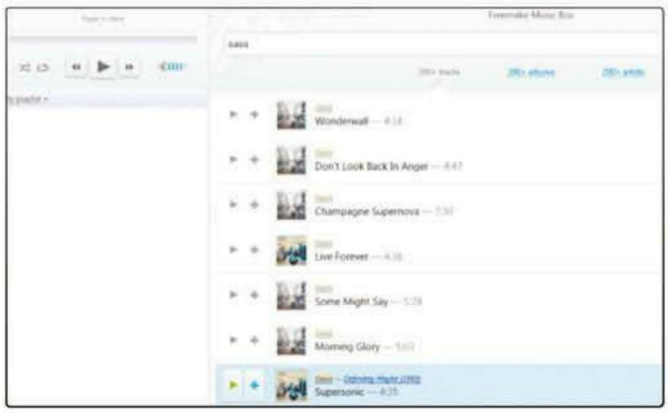
Freemake Music Box is a new way to discover music online. It enables you to stream millions of online songs. Not only that, you can also watch the video for the song you're listening to. Unlike other music systems such as Spotify, there's no region restriction and you don't have to register to use the service. You'll find that some songs are live versions rather than the original studio recordings though, so if you're playing music for an important occasion – at a party, for example – you might want to check that out first.

I like the fact that you can create and save playlists for later use, and change the order of songs in a playlist. The system works by indexing music that has been posted online, hosted by well-known sites. Let me show you how to use the software and search for music by your favourite artists.



Step-by-step | Browse for music and listen!





1 Let's begin

Download Freemake Music Box from www.freemake.com/free_music_box. Once done, open it up. You can see the Play, Forward/Back, Repeat and Shuffle controls in the top left, the playlist bar on the left and the main window where your music search results will appear. We're going to use the search bar in the top of the right-hand pane to find some tunes.

2 Finding music

Here I've just performed a quick search for 'Oasis' and it's given me various results from the band's back catalogue. There's no logical order to what it's showing us here unfortunately but, as we'll see shortly, you can refine the results using the blue links at the top of the window or click on an album name within the search results. Each song has a play button next to it.

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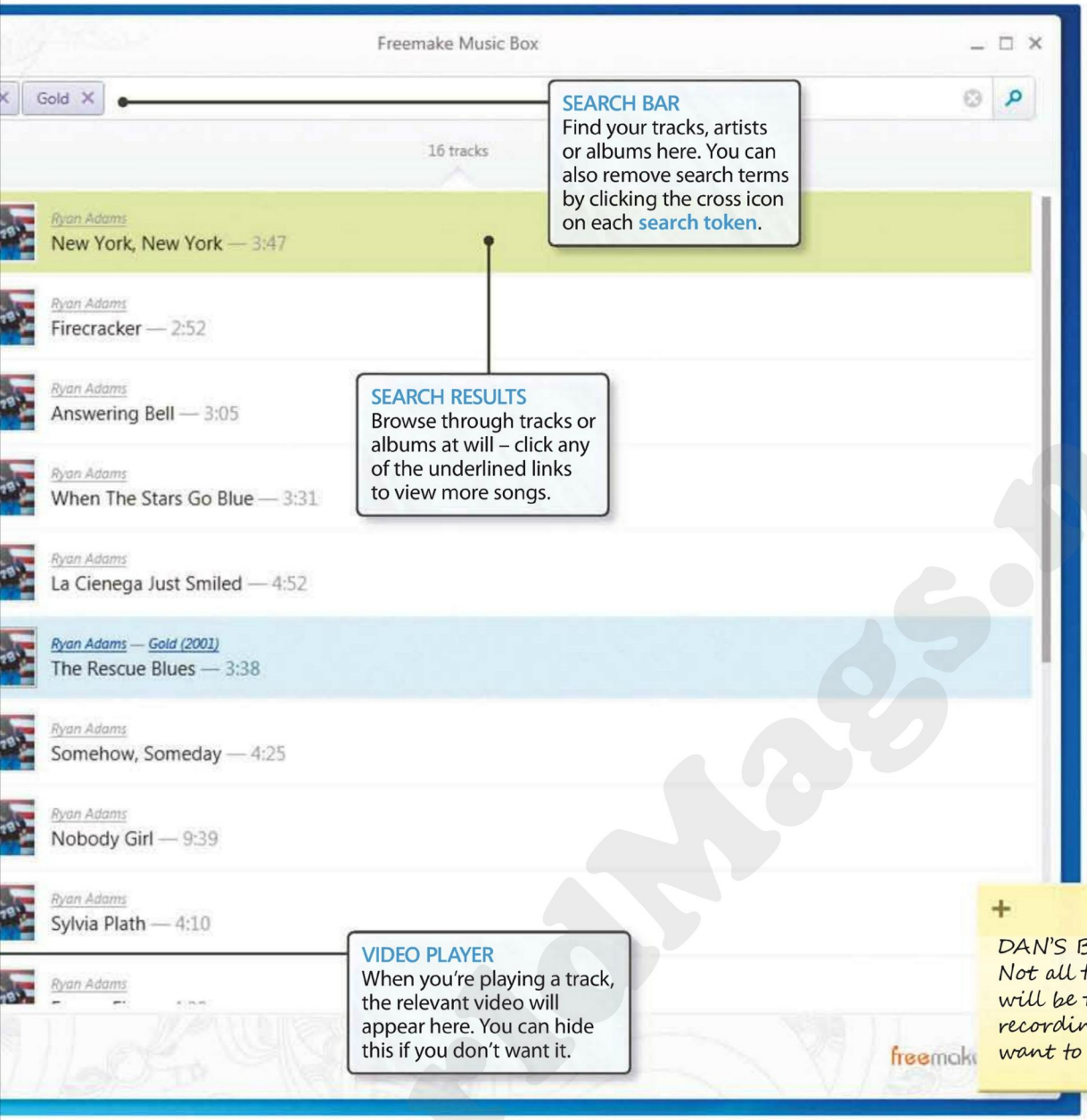

Freemake Music Box
Gold
16 tracks
Ryan Adams
New York, New York — 3:47
Ryan Adams
Firecracker — 2:52
Ryan Adams
Answering Bell — 3:05
Ryan Adams
When The Stars Go Blue — 3:31
Ryan Adams
La Cienega Just Smiled — 4:52
Ryan Adams — Gold (2001)
The Rescue Blues — 3:38
Ryan Adams
Somehow, Someday — 4:25
Ryan Adams
Nobody Girl — 9:39
Ryan Adams
Sylvia Plath — 4:10
Ryan Adams
SEARCH BAR
Find your tracks, artists or albums here. You can also remove search terms by clicking the cross icon on each search token.
SEARCH RESULTS
Browse through tracks or albums at will – click any of the underlined links to view more songs.
VIDEO PLAYER
When you're playing a track, the relevant video will appear here. You can hide this if you don't want it.

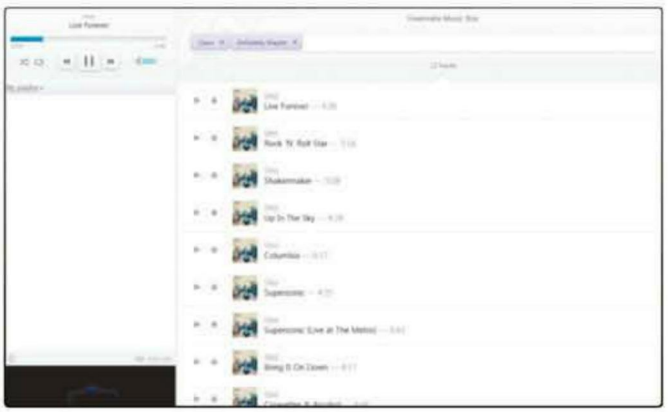
Jargon buster!

Stream
Play music not stored on your own machine. When you watch a YouTube video, for example, you're streaming it live from the internet. That's what you're doing with the music here.

Spotify
Spotify is another internet-based streaming music service – see more at www.spotify.com. You can get a certain amount of hours of free listening, but after that you'll need to get a subscription – unlike Freemake Music Box.

Search token
When you search for multiple variables, these are presented as different search tokens. You can remove or add these to give you greater control over search results.

DAN'S BEST TIP!
Not all the music you find will be the original studio recordings, so you might want to check that out first!



3 Play it
So let's now play a track. As you can see, the blue bar in the top left shows us the progress of the song, the time elapsed and the time remaining. What's more, the song's video has also started to play in the bottom left. You can hide the video using the grey option at the top of the video player should you want to.

4 Browse album
Now I've clicked the album name 'Definitely Maybe' in the search listings. As you can see, the search bar has changed. As we're searching by the artist and album name, there are two small search tokens there, each including a different search term. You'll also see that the search listing has also changed to represent all the songs on that album.

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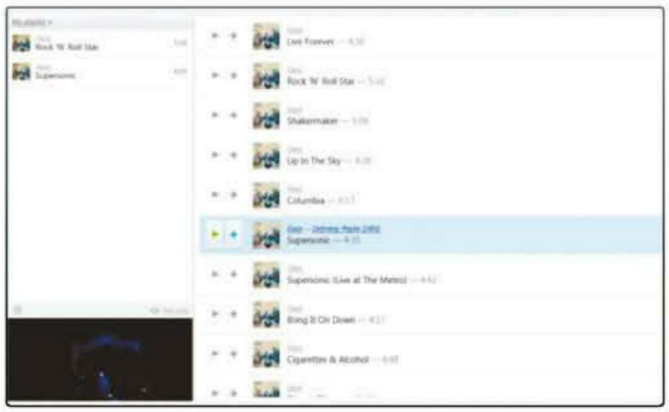
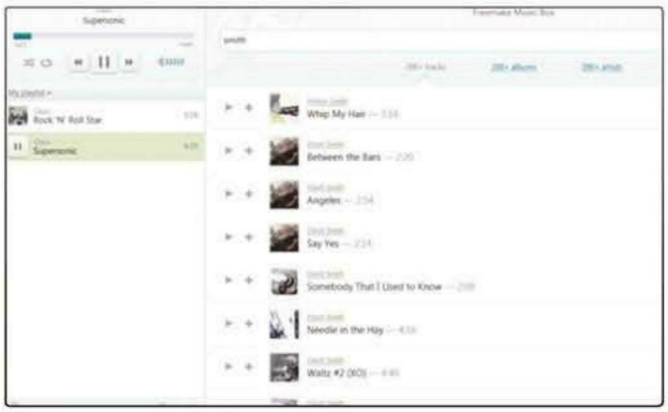


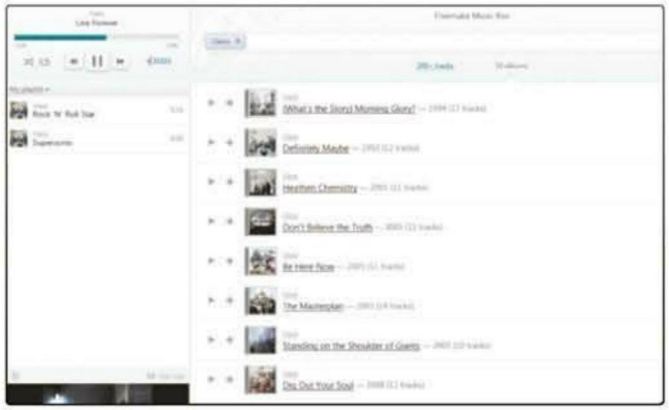
5 Add to playlists

As you can see, there's also a + sign next to each of the tracks in addition to the Play button. Clicking this adds an individual track to a playlist queue on the left. I find this works really well for tracks I can see in the search listing but that I don't want to listen to right away – I can return to them later on to have a listen.



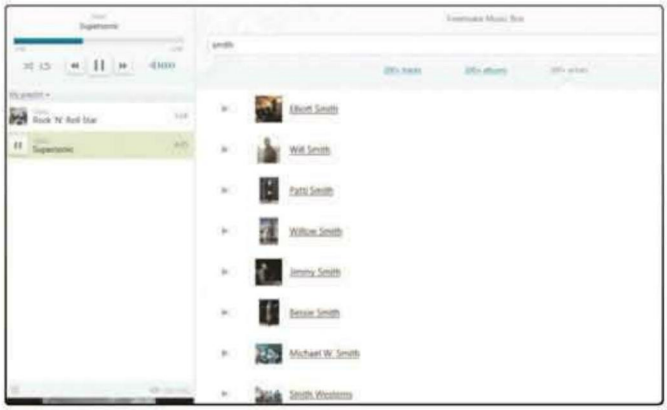
6 Playlist order

Another great thing about the way the playlist works in Freemake Music Box is that you don't have to play tracks in order from the playlist – you can listen to tracks in any way that you wish. Here I'm playing the second track from the list and so it's become highlighted in green. To remove tracks from your playlist, highlight them and hit 'Delete'.



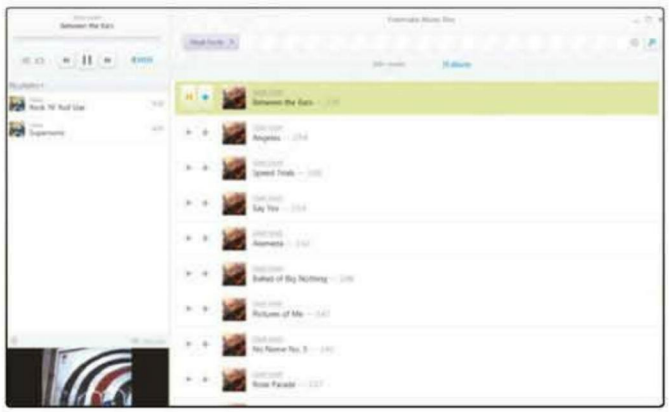
7 Filter by…

Here I've clicked the blue 'Albums' link underneath the search bar. This essentially tells the search listing that I just want to view albums by the artist I've searched for. So now I'm able to browse through all of Oasis's albums, view the artwork, and see when they were released and how many tracks are on each. Click the underlined links to get through to that album's tracks.



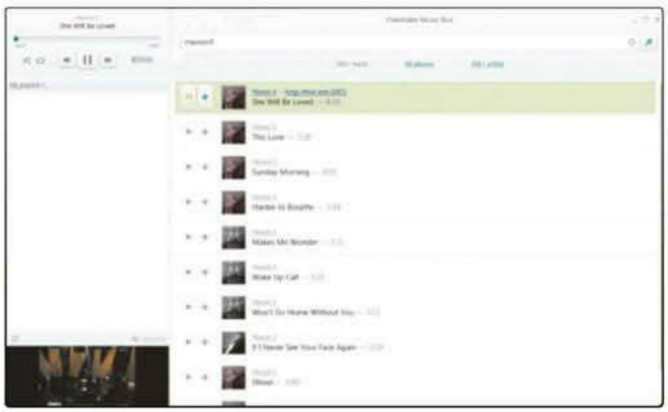
8 Artist search

Freemake Music Box is also great for finding music by artist. Here I've tapped in the generic name 'Smith' and I'm presented with tens of artists with 'Smith' in their name. I can directly play a selection of an artist's music using the Play button beside their name, or click their name to browse further and check out their albums or individual tracks.



9 Have a browse

The ease of browsing through artists, their albums and their tracks is one of the things I like most about Freemake Music Box. It's incredibly easy to do and you'll quickly find the music you need, even if you only know the artist's name or just part of the song title. You'll quickly find yourself skipping around artists and between tracks and albums at will.



10 Discover new music

Congratulations, you can now use Freemake Music Box to discover new music online! Hear a song on the radio, type in the name of the artist and you're immediately presented with the rest of their repertoire. It's true that not all artists and all albums are available on the service, but you'll find yourself in luck many more times than disappointed. Enjoy! ■

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Learn how to...

Create a master password

Your guide Rachael D'Cruze *says...*

"KeePass enables you to securely manage your passwords using a single master key."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL

Anyone can do it
▶ Straightforward
Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN

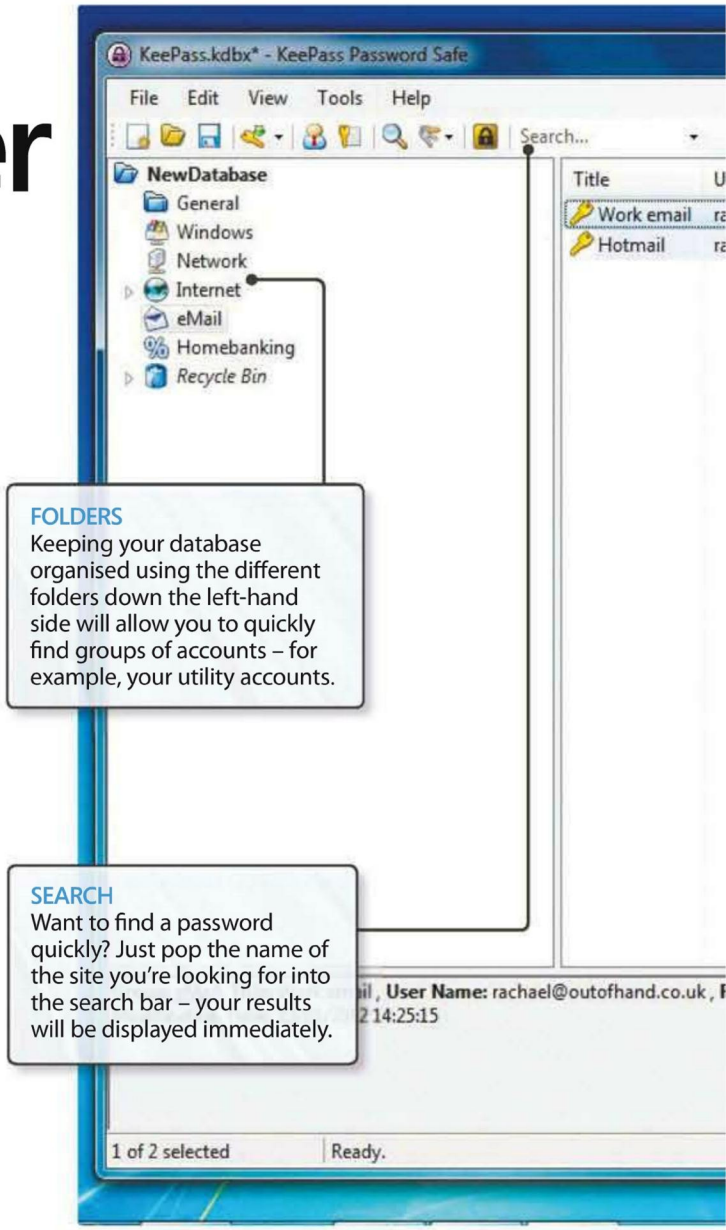
▶ 1 hour

SUITABLE FOR

▶ Windows 7
▶ Windows Vista
▶ Windows XP

Today you need a password for pretty much everything. You need one for Windows Live ID, another for your email address, one for each of your social networking accounts and then there are all your banking logons… The list goes on. Hopefully you already know that you should have a different password for each account. If not, a single mistake can leave all your accounts vulnerable to attack.

But although they're safe, and preferable to using a single insecure password for everything, multiple strong passwords can be difficult to remember and keep track of. That's why I love KeePass, a free open source password manager that helps you create strong passwords without the need to memorise them all. You put all of your passwords into one database, which is locked with a master key, so you only have to remember one set of login details.


KeePass.kdbx* - KeePass Password Safe
File Edit View Tools Help
Search...
NewDatabase
General
Windows
Network
Internet
eMail
Homebanking
Recycle Bin
Title
Work email
Hotmail
FOLDERS
Keeping your database organised using the different folders down the left-hand side will allow you to quickly find groups of accounts – for example, your utility accounts.
SEARCH
Want to find a password quickly? Just pop the name of the site you're looking for into the search bar – your results will be displayed immediately.
User Name: rachael@outofhand.co.uk
14:25:15
1 of 2 selected
Ready.

Step-by-step | Create a secure master keyword

1 Download software

Install KeePass from the disc or head to http://keepass.info. In the box titled 'Getting KeePass', click 'Downloads'. On the right side of the Download screen, click 'KeePass 2.18 (Installer EXE for Windows)'. In the pop-up box, click 'Run' and the installation will begin. A box will appear asking you to choose a language, so click 'English > OK'. KeePass Password Safe Setup Wizard will now open.

2 Set up KeePass

Close all other apps before clicking 'Next'. On the following screen, click to accept the licence agreement. KeePass will tell you where it plans to store the software. Click 'Next' to approve the destination. On the next screen, select 'Full installation' then 'Next'. Select all three options on the following screen to get a desktop and Quick Launch icon. On the final screen click 'Install > Finish'.

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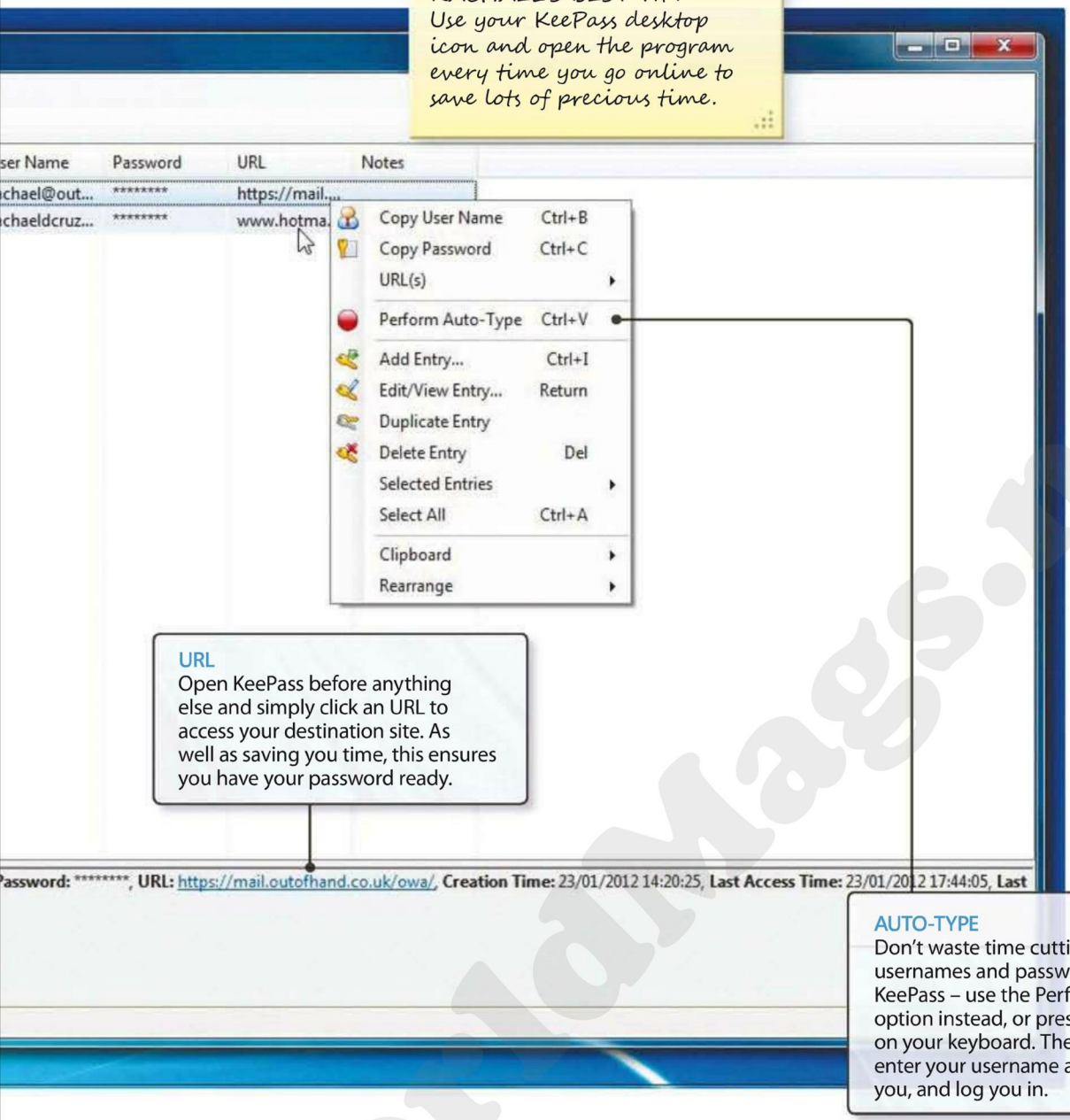
RACHAEL'S BEST TIP!
Use your KeePass desktop icon and open the program every time you go online to save lots of precious time.



URL
Open KeePass before anything else and simply click an URL to access your destination site. As well as saving you time, this ensures you have your password ready.

AUTO-TYPE
Don't waste time cutting and pasting usernames and passwords from KeePass – use the Perform Auto-Type option instead, or press the [Ctrl]+[V] on your keyboard. The program will enter your username and password for you, and log you in.

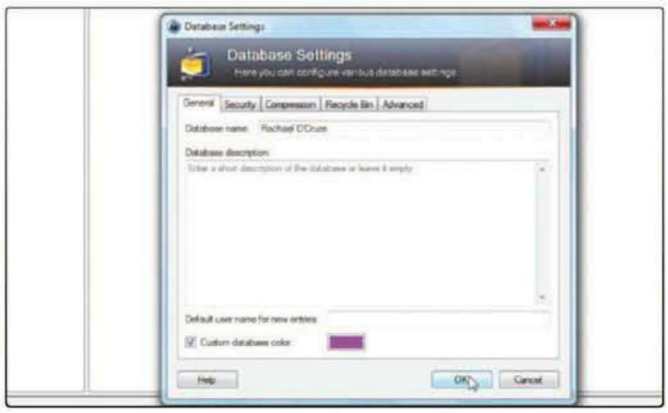
Jargon buster!

Open source
With open source software, the source code is available to anyone who wants it, and users are encouraged to modify the program. This is intended to make the software more useful, and to iron out errors over time.

Automatic updates
When you enable automatic updates for specific applications, you are giving permission for the program to install updates and upgrades without continuously asking your permission.

On your disc

You'll find **KeePass** in the Encryption section of your disc



3 Choose a master password

A pop-up box will now ask if you want to enable automatic updates. Click 'Enable' to keep everything running smoothly. KeePass will now open. Click 'File > New' and then click 'Save' to create a new password database. A new pop-up window will appear asking you to supply a master keyword, which will be required to open the database. Enter your password and click 'OK'.

4 Configure settings

A database settings pop-up window will now appear. In the 'General' tab, give your database a name and add a description and a colour if you wish. Leave everything else on its default settings and click 'OK'. Now you'll see the main window, where you'll build your database. On the left, you'll see the entry groups. On the right, you'll see the actual password entries.

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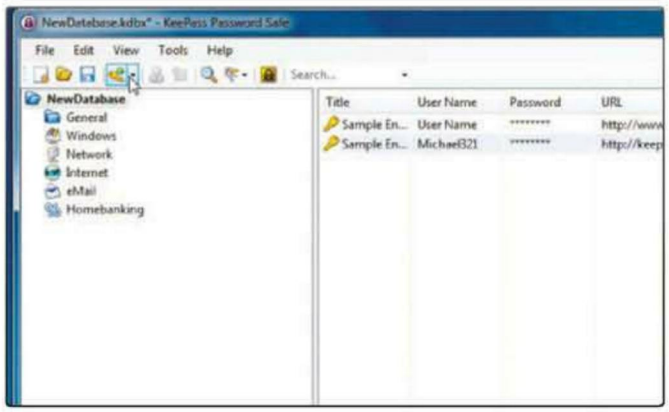
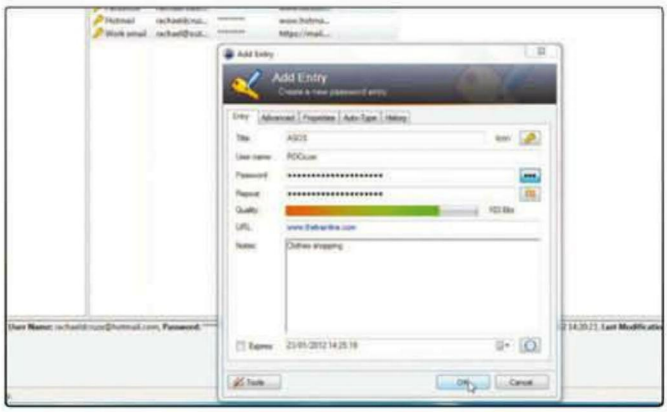


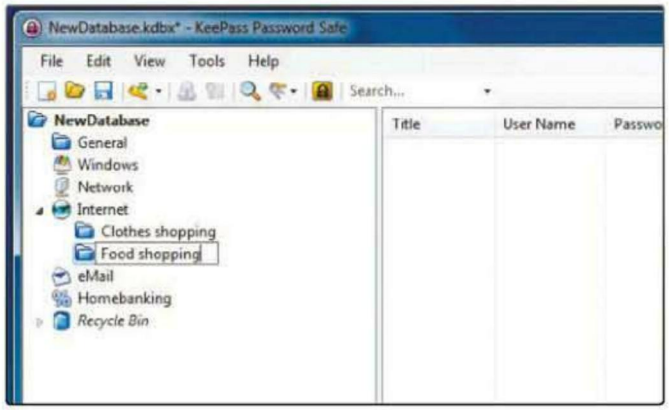
5 Add an entry

With everything set-up you're now ready to store your first password in the KeePass database. Click the password entry icon (a spanner and an arrow) in the menu bar and choose 'Add entry'. In the New Entry window, enter a title – for example, Facebook, your username, an URL and the actual password. When you've finished, click 'OK'. Your new entry will now be in the password list.



6 Add them all

In the same way as step 5, add your login details to KeePass for all your online accounts, from social media to email, shopping and banking. This may take a while depending on if you can remember all of your passwords… Bear with it – just keep in mind that this is the last time you'll have to recall them! If you compile them on paper first, make sure to shred it afterwards.

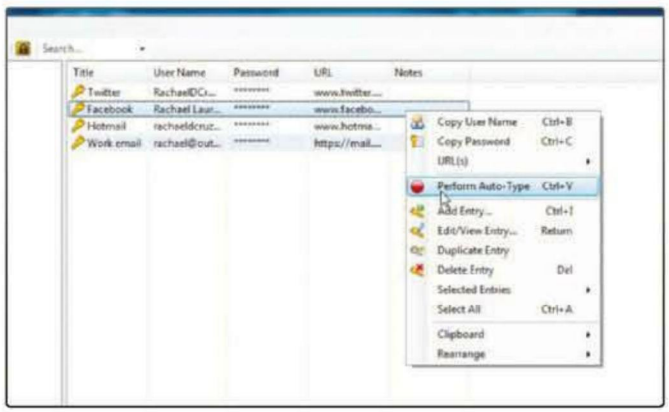


7 Organise it

Once you've entered all of your passwords and associated websites into the database, it can look a little overwhelming. New entries are automatically stored under 'General', but you can use the other folders underneath to organise your entries. You can even go a step further and create sub-folders by clicking on a category, then choosing 'Add group' and naming your new folder.

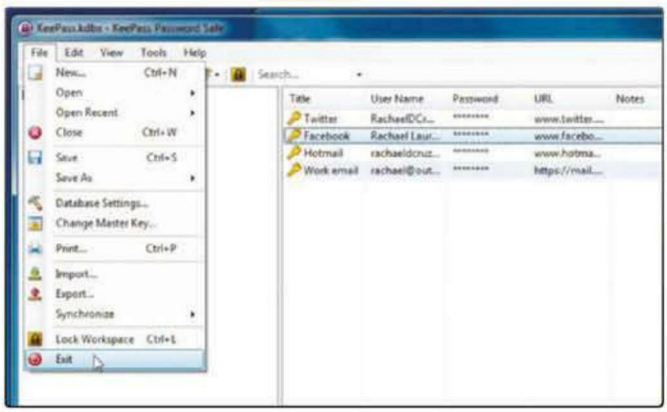
8 Save it

You've spent a lot of time and effort making your database, so make sure you save it. Click 'File > Save as > Save to file', then choose a file name and location to save it. Finally, click 'Save'. From now on, when you update your database, you can just press the 'Save' icon, which looks like a disc – you only need to specify a location once.



9 Put it to work

The next time you want to visit a site that requires you to log in, open KeePass and use the search box at the top to find the entry. Click on the entry and you'll see the URL at the bottom of the screen. Click it and the site will open in a new window. In KeePass, right-click your entry and select 'Perform auto-type'. KeePass will now enter your username and password for you!



10 Sign out

When you've finished online, sign out of KeePass by clicking 'File > Exit' to protect all of your account names and passwords. Remember, don't disclose your KeePass password to anyone else, or they will have access to all your accounts. That's it – you're now up and running with KeePass. Well done – here's to a world without password reminders and account hackers! ■

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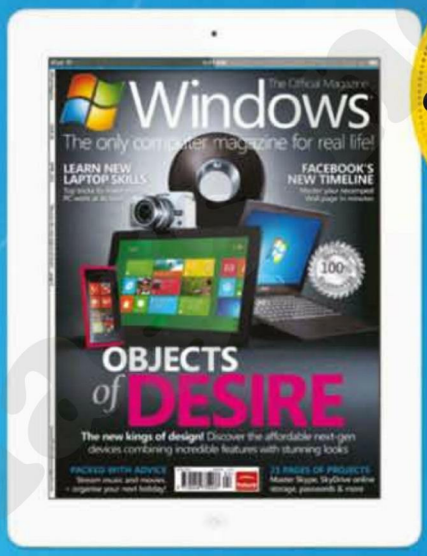
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Learn how to...

Create and share files with SkyDrive

Your guide Henry Winchester says...

"When it comes to online files, things get a bit more complicated. Microsoft's SkyDrive makes uploading, sharing and downloading documents a doddle."

At a glance...

SKILL LEVEL

- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

TIME TAKEN

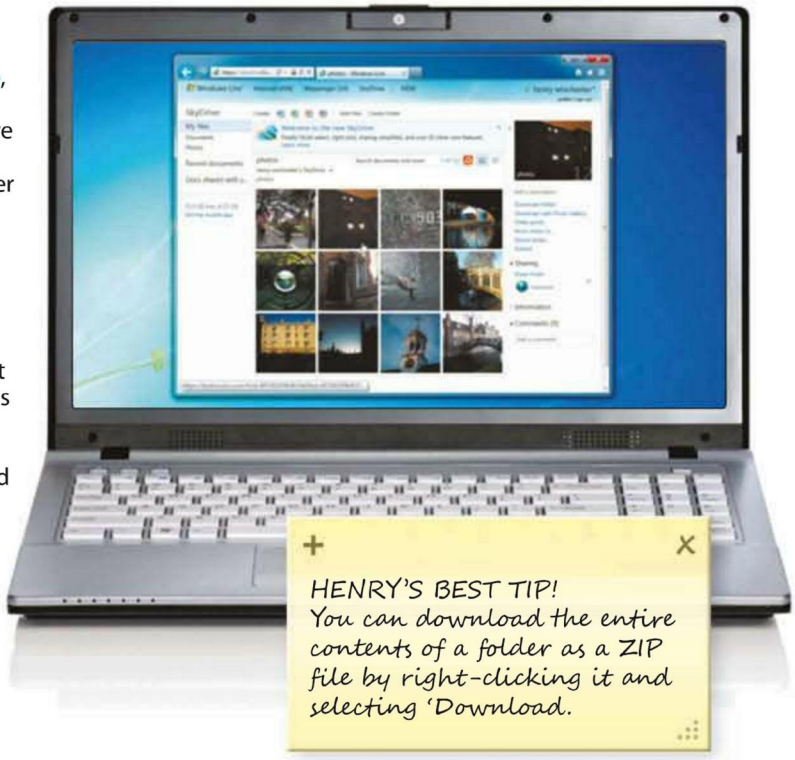
10 minutes

SUITABLE FOR

- Windows 7
- Windows Vista
- Windows XP

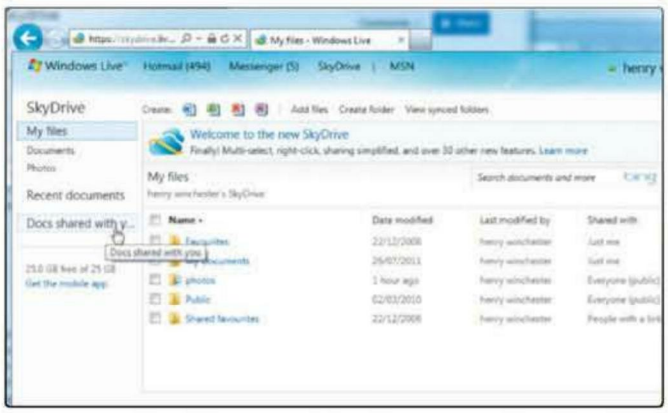
One of those phrases that is beloved of technology companies is **cloud storage**, but no-one seems to understand it quite as well as Microsoft. Its SkyDrive service was launched in 2008, and Microsoft has been working on it ever since. Put simply, it lets you upload files and then access them from any internet-connected computer and even some mobile phones.

Recent additions to the SkyDrive service include the ability to right-click files to access more options, just as you would in Windows Explorer, as well as multiple file selection using the checkboxes to the left. This is on top of a wealth of already established features, such as online editing for Word documents and Excel spreadsheets, and the ability to share files with friends and family. It's such a useful and cohesive service that you'll wonder how you ever lived without it.



HENRY'S BEST TIP!
You can download the entire contents of a folder as a ZIP file by right-clicking it and selecting 'Download.

Step-by-step | Get started with SkyDrive



1 Sign in

Enter http://skydrive.live.com in your browser's address bar and press [Enter]. You'll need a Windows Live ID to access SkyDrive – this is usually an email address that ends in '@hotmail.com'. If you don't already have a Windows ID, you can click 'Sign up' to the left of the page to register. When you're ready, enter your username and password to access the SkyDrive website.

2 The basics

SkyDrive looks a lot like Windows Explorer, and in the main pane you'll see folders like My Documents and Photos. Clicking folders on the upper-left takes you to any relevant content on your SkyDrive. 'Recent documents' shows a list of documents you've accessed recently, and 'Docs shared with you' shows images and files shared via Windows Live Messenger or Hotmail.

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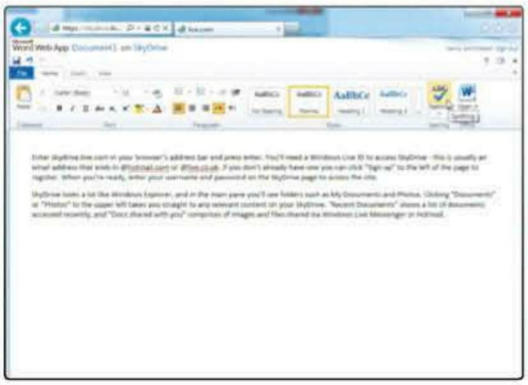
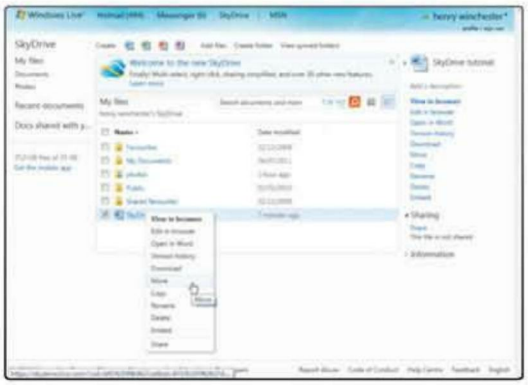




3 Create documents

SkyDrive enables you to create Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations and OneNote Notebooks within the site. You'll find icons to the upper left of the screen. Handily, you can access SkyDrive files from any internet-connected PC.

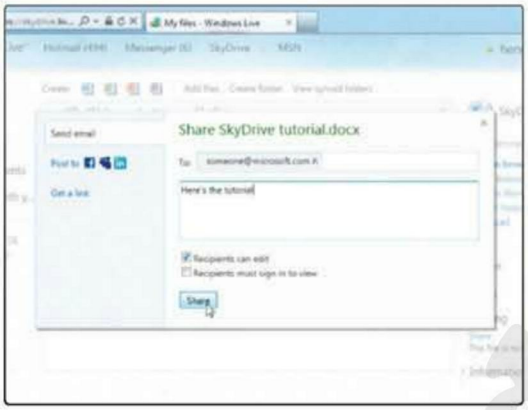
4 Right-click options

Once you've created a document, return to the SkyDrive main page and you'll see it there. Right-clicking a file gives you a wealth of options, like editing it in your browser again, opening it in Word or moving it to a more convenient location like My Documents.

Jargon buster!

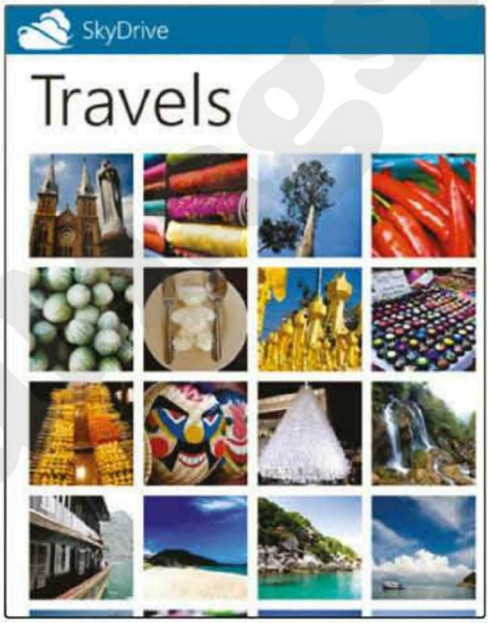
Cloud storage
The 'cloud' in question is the internet, and uploading files that can be accessed from any internet-connected device.

GB
Gigabyte, or 1,000,000 kilobytes (KB). SkyDrive comes with 25GB and an average Word document is a paltry 25KB, so you've got plenty of room for all your digital content.



5 Sharing files

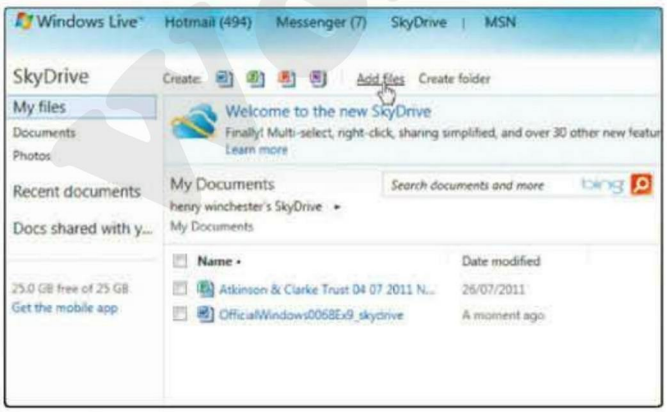
Right-clicking and selecting 'Share' lets you send the file as an email attachment. The To: box specifies recipients and the checkbox at the bottom defines whether the file can be edited. You can also post the file to social networking sites with the icons to the right or generate an email link.

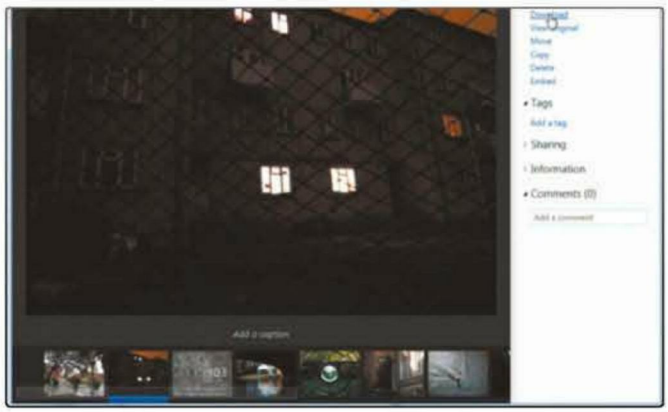


6 SkyDrive Mobile

SkyDrive can also be accessed from a mobile phone with internet access. There are dedicated apps for iPhones and Windows Phones, and other phones (like those running the Android OS) can access files and folders if you type the following address into the browser: http://skydrive.live.com.

The iPhone and Windows Phone apps let you share from your mobile, too – either access the file you want to share and tap the action button to the top-right on an iPhone) or long-press the item and choose 'Send a link' on a Windows Phone.





7 Upload

To upload files to SkyDrive, simply click on the folder you want to upload to and choose 'Add files' at the top. Next, browse to the files on your computer and click 'Upload'. You'll be able to open relevant files, such as Word Documents, from within SkyDrive itself, and you can collaborate with others if you choose 'Recipients can edit' when sharing.

8 The SkyDrive advantage

You should now have a solid understanding of how SkyDrive works, creating Word documents and Excel spreadsheets, uploading files and even accessing and sharing files from mobile devices. SkyDrive gives you 25GB of storage, which is enough for all your files, and best of all it's completely free. Finally, don't forget that you can also upload photos and music. ■

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GET MORE FROM YOUR LAPTOP!

Configure your laptop to make it more productive and straightforward to use with our essential tips, tweaks and techniques. *By Nick Peers*

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One of the drawbacks of Windows' most compelling feature – its versatility – is that it's set up to cater for as wide an audience as possible. You can start using it straight away, but as you become more familiar with how your laptop works, you might start to experience frustration at the way things are done.

Here's the good news: that compelling, versatile feature also allows you to use Windows in a variety of different ways. Instead of adapting the way you work, you can actually customise and tweak your laptop's settings to suit you. And in this feature we'll show you exactly how to do that. You'll discover how to set up Windows to work the way you want it to, from configuring the desktop so your favourite programs and frequently accessed files are just a click or two away to creating your own customised shortcuts. You'll even be able to remap certain keys so they perform the functions you want them to rather than what your laptop manufacturer envisaged.

We'll also reveal a selection of free programs that are designed to be simpler to use, plus look at what hardware add-ons can help make your laptop both more productive and comfortable to use.

Whether you're a first-time laptop user or an old hand, you'll find something in this feature to help you get more from your computer. And you don't necessarily have to be a laptop owner to benefit either – many of the tweaks and tips offered here will work perfectly with desktop PCs too.

Let's start making your laptop more productive by taking advantage of its touchpad. It's tempting to see the touchpad as little more than a basic substitute for your mouse, but you're missing a trick if you do. Most touchpads are touch sensitive, meaning you can do more than simply move the cursor around your screen and click to select.

To see if your laptop has a touchpad that supports gestures, click 'Start', type **mouse** into the Search box and click 'Mouse' when prompted to open the Mouse Control Panel. Look for a 'Device Settings' tab – select this and you should see a reference to your touchpad. Click the 'Settings' button beneath it and expand the Application Gestures section to see what gestures are available for your laptop model.

If your touchpad doesn't support gestures – or supported gestures are thin on the ground – you can purchase a standalone touchpad, such as Logitech's Wireless Touchpad (around £45, www.logitech.com). The box overleaf reveals some of the more common gestures available to you.

Alternatively, why buy new equipment when you can add simple gesture support for free? StrokeIt Home (www.tcbmi.com/strokeit/downloads.shtml), which is free for personal use, adds support for gestures using your mouse or touchpad in conjunction with the right mouse button – the step-by-step guide overleaf reveals all you need to know. What's more, you'll soon be spending less time pointing and clicking – and more time doing the things you love.

Six free apps to make your life easier

AbiWord
If you want simple formatting and editing tools, try AbiWord (www.abisource.com). If all you need is a basic text editor, then check out Writemonkey (http://writemonkey.com), which offers a completely distraction-free interface.

Windows Live Mail
With its ribbon-like interface and big, bold buttons, Windows Live Mail from Microsoft (http://explore.live.com/windows-live-essentials) is simply the most user-friendly email tool out there. It also has a calendar and RSS reader built in.

Windows Live Writer
Don't waste time logging on to your blog account through your web browser. Instead, compose blogs from the comfort of your own desktop using Windows Live Writer (http://explore.live.com/windows-live-essentials).

Windows Live Photo Gallery
Both Windows Live Photo Gallery (http://explore.live.com/windows-live-essentials) and Google Picasa (http://picasa.google.com) offer all the editing tools you should need without requiring much more than pointing and clicking.

Serif PagePlus Starter
If you want a free tool that combines all of the functionality you need for designing newsletters and other publications within a simple, clutter-free interface, then try Serif PagePlus Starter Edition (www.freeserifsoftware.com).

Money Manager Ex
Money Manager Ex is a dedicated tool for managing your personal finances, so you can ditch those complicated spreadsheets for good and get in control of your money. You can download it free at (www.codelathe.com/mmex).

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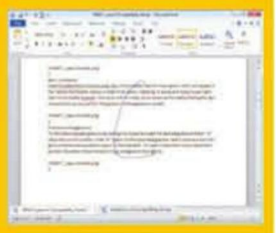
Use gestures with your mouse

Basic orientation

Download and install StrokeIt Home. Once installed, launch the program, which will appear in the Taskbar Notification area as a small white cursor, indicating it's active and ready to use (right-clicking this disables StrokeIt – the cursor will turn red). Gestures are performed by holding the right mouse button as you perform the gesture, which appears on-screen.

Practice existing gestures



Try the following basic gestures by moving the mouse to create the desired gesture or letter: C closes the current window, while O opens the File Open dialog box. Select some text and then gesture the mouse upwards to copy it to the clipboard. To paste it elsewhere in your document, position the cursor where the text is to go and gesture downwards.

Learn new gestures

A number of gestures are already set up – to see these, click the StrokeIt Taskbar Notification area icon. Expand the [Global Actions] section to view what gestures are available for all applications and Windows itself. You'll also see sections relating to specific programs – the gestures contained here will only work in the application in question. Visit http://bit.ly/strokeitgestures for additional help with gestures.

Create your own

If you don't like the gesture assigned to a particular action, you can change it. Select the offending gesture, then click the drop-down arrow above the Remove Gesture button to choose another to replace it. Alternatively, create your own gesture from scratch – when the Unrecognized Gesture window appears, click 'New Gesture', give it a name and click 'OK'.

SET UP YOUR DESKTOP

The Windows desktop is a user-friendly, approachable way to use your computer, but as always there are tips and tweaks to make it even more useful, efficient and better optimised for your way of working.

First, make better use of the Taskbar. It's always visible at the bottom of the screen, so you never need to clear away other windows to get to it, and if you're using Windows 7 you can take advantage of another time-saving feature in the form of Jump Lists as well.

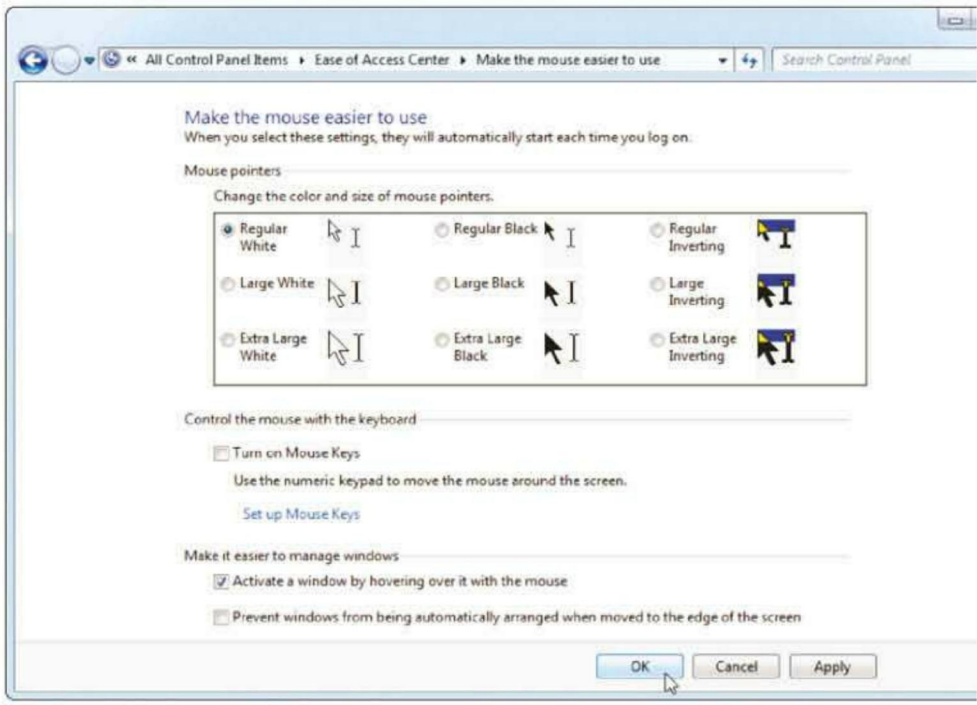
Adding programs to the Taskbar is simple. Windows Vista and Windows XP users can simply drag program shortcuts on to the Taskbar. People with Windows 7 can right-click an existing shortcut on the desktop or Start menu and then choose 'Pin to Taskbar'.

When you right-click on certain Taskbar shortcuts in Windows 7 you'll see a jump list of recently accessed documents in that program appear, allowing you to open them and the program with a single click (click the pin icon next to an entry to place it permanently at the top of the jump list).

Windows 7 users can also customise the Taskbar's Notification area to choose exactly which icons are always visible. Click the arrow to its left to reveal all Notification area icons – drag one on to the Notification area to permanently pin it in place for easy access (icons can also be dragged the other way to hide them from view).

Windows 7 users can maximise windows by dragging them to the top of the screen, or place two windows side-by-side by dragging each to opposite sides of the screen. You can also select a window and quickly resize it by holding down the [Windows] key as you press an arrow key.

When browsing your computer's hard drive for files, Windows 7 and Vista users should make use of the Favourites section in the left-hand pane – drag a folder into this list to place a shortcut there for easy access. Windows 7 users can also use the Library feature to group related folders into one easily accessible location – click 'Libraries' to get started.


« All Control Panel Items ▸ Ease of Access Center ▸ Make the mouse easier to use
Search Control Panel
Make the mouse easier to use
When you select these settings, they will automatically start each time you log on.
Mouse pointers
Change the color and size of mouse pointers.
Regular White
Regular Black
Regular Inverting
Large White
Large Black
Large Inverting
Extra Large White
Extra Large Black
Extra Large Inverting
Control the mouse with the keyboard
Turn on Mouse Keys
Use the numeric keypad to move the mouse around the screen.
Set up Mouse Keys
Make it easier to manage windows
Activate a window by hovering over it with the mouse
Prevent windows from being automatically arranged when moved to the edge of the screen
OK
Cancel
Apply

USABILITY You'll find lots of tweaks under the Ease of Access Centre in Windows 7 and Vista

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START MENU SHORTCUTS You can pin items to the Start menu and access Jump Lists in Windows 7

MAKE WINDOWS MORE ACCESSIBLE

You might be forgiven for thinking the Ease of Access Centre (Accessibility Options in Windows XP) is solely for those with sight, sound or motor-related disabilities, but in actual fact you'll find lots of useful tweaks here that can make things easier for all users. Access these options via the 'Start > All Programs > Accessories' menu.

The simplest thing to do here is work your way through the options on offer – use the wizard to answer a few questions that will help Windows determine what settings to offer you, or manually go through all the available tweaks.

It's always worth looking at mouse and keyboard-related options to see if any of the tweaks offered sit more comfortably with the way you like to work. You can, for example, change the focus of a window simply by moving the mouse over it instead of pointing and clicking (select 'Activate a window by hovering over it with the mouse'). If you don't like the way that Windows automatically rearranges your program windows when they're dragged to the sides of the screen, then you'll find an option to switch that off here too.

If you have a headset or microphone, you might also like to experiment with using speech recognition to control certain aspects of your computer. Both Windows 7 and Vista have speech recognition built in and you can switch it on and set it up following the simple wizard that's accessible from the section about using your computer without a mouse or keyboard.

Common gestures for your touchpad

One-finger control

Using your touchpad with just one finger allows you to operate it exactly the same way you would your mouse.

Scrolling

You can scroll vertically or horizontally through large documents or web pages using either two-finger swiping (Logitech and Synaptics) or the right and bottom edges of your touchpad (Synaptics).

Two-finger rotate

Some Synaptics devices allow you to both twist and pivot objects by using two fingers together in a twisting movement to rotate things left and right.

Three-finger swipe

Use this horizontally to move back and forth between pictures in a slideshow or picture viewer, or to move backwards and forwards through your web browsing history. Synaptic touchpads can also use it vertically to enter or exit slideshow mode.

Four-finger swipe (horizontal)

This gesture is used by Logitech wireless touchpads to move between open applications. Just swipe your fingers to switch from one program to the next.

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Six free tools to make your PC faster and easier to use

1. LASTPASS

www.lastpass.com

Once installed, all you need to remember is a single username and master password, and this tool will automatically fill in details and forms securely for you in your web browser. Now you can have separate passwords for all your accounts without having to remember or type anything!

2. SOLUTO

www.soluto.com

Speed up your laptop by slashing the startup times for both Windows and your web browser. The program reveals which items are starting with your laptop or browser, and lets you safely disable non-essential items to free up resources.

3. BATTERYCARE

http://batterycare.net

Windows 7 does a perfectly adequate job of providing you with information about how much juice is left in your battery, but if you want to go one step further and monitor its health, plus tweak settings, install this.

4. VIRTUAL CLONEDRIVE

www.slysoft.com/en/virtual-clonedrive.html

Use ISO Recorder (http://alexfeinman.com) to convert your physical CDs and DVDs into virtual ISO files, and you can access them directly from your hard drive using Virtual CloneDrive, which basically emulates a DVD drive. It saves on battery life and makes the perfect travelling companion.

5. FINESTRA VIRTUAL DESKTOPS

www.z-sys.org

Too many windows open at the same time for comfort? Windows 7 does an excellent job of managing multiple windows via the Taskbar and Aero Peek, but if your desktop's still too crowded, run this and you can have four virtual desktops working side-by-side.

6. POP PEEPER

www.poppeeper.com

Keep an eye on your email direct from the Notification area of the Taskbar. POP Peeper imports your email accounts, then gives you early warning as to what's waiting. It's a good way to filter out spam and other unwanted email without downloading it too.

CREATE YOUR OWN SHORTCUTS

ASSIGN SHORTCUT
Open your favourite applications or tools by assigning a keyboard shortcut to them

You can create convenient desktop shortcuts to any part of your system. To create a shortcut to a program, file, folder or even web address, right-click on the desktop and choose 'New > Shortcut', then follow the prompts to either select the folder or file (click 'Browse') or type the web address. You can also create shortcuts to frequently accessed Control Panels: click 'Start > Control Panel' and opt to view by large or small icons. Then simply right-click the Control Panel in question and choose 'Create Shortcut' to place a shortcut on the desktop.

You can also assign keyboard shortcuts to new and existing shortcuts. Just right-click the shortcut in question and choose 'Properties' (if the shortcut is on the Windows 7 Taskbar, right-click it, then right-click the program name that pops up and choose 'Properties' to access it). Place the cursor in the Shortcut key box and press your desired key – note it'll be assigned [Ctrl] + [Alt], but you can also hold down other keys such as [Windows], [Ctrl] + [Shift] or [Ctrl] + [Alt] + [Shift] too.

It's also worth exploring keyboard shortcuts within programs – these are displayed next to menu entries, or check the Help file for more details. Some applications, including Microsoft Office, also allow you to specify your own custom keyboard shortcuts – again, consult the Help file for details. People running Office 2010 should open the Options dialog box, select 'Customize Ribbon' and click 'Customize' next to Keyboard shortcuts to get started, for example.

It's also possible to remap certain keyboard functions, so pressing [Caps Lock] does something different, for example. The step-by-step guide reveals how to do this using a free program called SharpKeys (http://sharpkeys.codeplex.com) on the opposite page.

MORE WINDOWS TWEAKS

Press [Windows] + [R] and the Run dialog box will appear. This powerful tool lets you quickly access programs, system tools and more. Click 'Browse' to select a file on your hard drive, or type the name of the program (such as services.msc to open the Services console). For a comprehensive list of shortcuts you can type into the Run dialog box, visit http://bit.ly/b5vEfH.

Finally, you may find that double-clicking a file opens it in the wrong program. To change which program automatically opens a file when it's double-clicked, right-click the offending file and choose 'Open with > Choose Default Program'. Pick your desired program from the list, or click 'Browse' if it's not present, make sure 'Always use the selected program to open this type of file' is ticked and click 'OK'. Job done.

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HARDWARE IMPROVEMENTS

You can also make your laptop easier and more comfortable to use with the help of some hardware add-ons. If you find your laptop's trackpad too awkward to use, just plug in any USB mouse and use that instead. Similarly, if you like listening to music, but your laptop's speakers aren't up to the task, plug in another set via the headphones socket.

If you frequently work with your laptop on your lap, you'll know how hot it can get. Purchase a laptop cooling stand to act as a barrier between you and your notebook – a beneficial side-effect of the cooler is that it'll extend the life of your laptop's components by cooling them down.

If you frequently use your laptop away from home, you may rely heavily on its battery. If this fails to give you enough juice between charges, consider purchasing an add-on battery such as the PowerGorilla (£150, www.powertraveller.com), which can double or even triple the amount of time you stay away from the mains socket.

Finally, if your notebook has an ExpressCard slot, you can expand its functionality by adding extra ports such as Firewire or eSATA, which aren't commonly included on laptops. Perfect if you want to transfer footage from a non-USB camcorder to your laptop...

EXTRA JUICE
Spend longer away from the mains with the PowerGorilla add-on battery

Adam's verdict

If you've been struggling to get to grips with the way your laptop works, you should have found a number of useful tools in this feature to help you wrestle back control of your computer. You'll also hopefully have found new ways to speed up the way you work, helping you to spend more time actually using your PC rather than navigating around it.

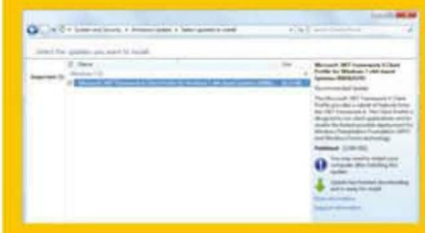
There are some nifty techniques we urge you to try as a result of following this feature – if you keep bashing the wrong keys by mistake, give SharpKeys a try. Want to do more with your touchpad? Take the time to master the gestures it offers or – if you're using a mouse – install StrokeIt Home and start doing magical things simply by wiggling your mouse in a certain way.

We'd also urge you to take a look at some of the free software we've uncovered that can simplify the way you work too, while you can also save time by trying some of the apps and utilities we showcase in our guide to making your laptop faster and easier to use.

All in all, there's something in this feature for everyone – go on, discover new techniques that will change the way you use your laptop forever! ■

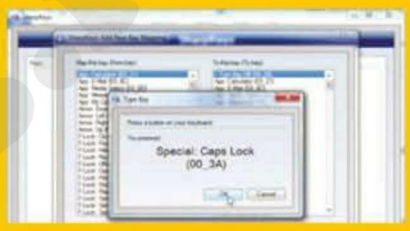
Adam Ifans
Editor

Change how your keyboard functions



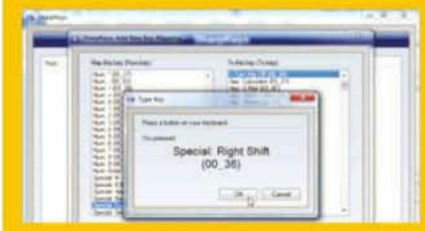
1 Install SharpKeys

Before installing SharpKeys, open the 'Programs and Features Control Panel' ('Add or Remove Programs' in Windows XP) and check if the Microsoft .NET Framework 4 Client Profile is installed. If not, open Windows Update and look for it under Important Updates (Custom in Windows XP).



2 Pick key to change

Launch 'SharpKeys' from the Start menu or desktop, clicking 'Yes' or 'Continue' if prompted, then read the warning message and click 'OK'. When the main screen appears, click the 'Add' button. You'll be prompted to select the key you wish to change from the left-hand menu – click the 'Type Key' button and press the key you wish to change.



3 Choose new function

Verify the key is the correct one and click 'OK'. Now click the right-hand 'Type Key' button. Press the key you wish to remap your old key to. Click 'OK' when done.

4 Apply changes

Now click 'Add' to remap another key or key combination. When done, click 'Write to Registry' and restart your computer to remap your keys.

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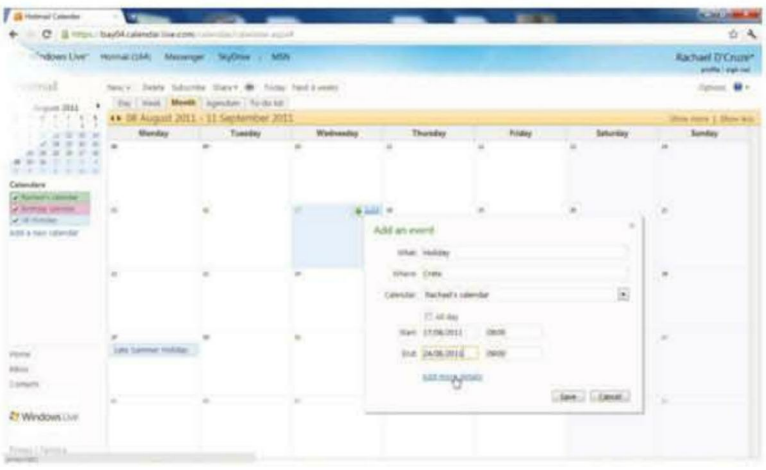
10 WAYS TO ORGANISE THE BEST HOLIDAY EVER WITH YOUR PC

From better deals to the hottest hotels and made-to-order travel itineraries, your computer holds the secret to happy holidays. **By Rachael D'Cruze**

1 MAKE IT AN EVENT

If you're planning a large family holiday or going away with a group of friends, it can become difficult to get everything organised and keep everyone up to date. Windows Live can help – head to http://calendar.live.com and sign in using your Windows Live ID, just as you'd sign in to your Hotmail account. Create an event by clicking the day your holiday will start and selecting 'Add'. Enter all the information you have, invite your fellow travellers to join your event as prompted, and add more information as you go by selecting 'Add more details'. Now everyone can see exactly what's happening, saving you the effort of emailing and calling them all to confirm details – perfect!



EVENT HORIZON With Windows Live calendar it's really simple to make an event and keep everyone informed of any changes – and it's a great way to organise your social life too

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2 GET IT CHEAPER

It pays to shop around for the best possible deal on your holiday, and you can use what you've saved as extra spending money and have an even better time. Gone are the days of popping to your local travel agent and booking on the spot – online comparison sites are the place to go. Our favourites are www.holidaysupermarket.com, www.travelzoo.com and www.icelolly.com, which all scour the net to get you the best possible price for your travels – check all three if you're after a real bargain.

GOTTA TRY THEM ALL **It pays to use more than one holiday comparison site if you want the very most for your money**

CHECK IT OUT **Review sites are indispensable for making sure you're not inadvertently booking the holiday from hell**

3 AVOID DISASTER

Seen a deal that looks too good to be true? Perhaps it is. Find out what your destination is really like by reading what others have to say on www.holidaywatchdog.com and www.tripadvisor.com. Whether you're interested in hotels or package deals, you'll be able to gain a good insight into previous guests' experiences. Both of these sites have built up great communities of travellers who have taken the time to submit warts-and-all reviews and photographs that can help you decide where to stay and what to do when you're there. Be sure to return the favour when you get home by submitting your own review!

4 CREATE YOUR OWN GUIDE BOOK

Visiting a new city is an exhilarating experience, but travel plans can be tricky. Guidebooks bombard you with hundreds of attractions spread all over the country, and you just won't have time to see them all. That's why we love www.stay.com – it lets you explore your destination and its attractions, hotels, eateries and so on before you travel, then plan your trip according to what you'd like to do. Creating your own tailor-made guide – complete with map – is simple and fun thanks to the site's friendly interface. Once you're done, you can print it out, download it to your mobile or share it with the rest of your group via Facebook, Twitter or email.

5 BE EXCHANGE AWARE

Knowing how far your British pound will stretch abroad is an important part of ensuring a happy holiday. The exchange rate varies greatly between countries, so it's important to research it first. As well as determining how much money you need to take, it can be an important factor in deciding where to go. For example, if you're skiing on a budget you'll be able to live as a king in Bulgaria, but like a pauper in Switzerland. The best currency converter around is www.xe.com.

travelturtle
Saturday
21, January 2012
Bookmark this page
home
international weather conditions
currency converter
world health news
search :
Welcome to Travelturtle, the travel website that provides you with country specific medical and vaccination reports usually only available to registered UK healthcare professionals.
Travel Health Info
travel health advice
travel vaccine details
travel immunisation
Egypt
Travel Health home • Country Specific Information & Advice • E • Egypt
This city of treasures is still worth the trek
AS THE aircraft banked over the floodlit pyramids, it was soon apparent that Cairo was very different from how I remembered it.
For a start, there were no plumes of smoke rising above the city. There

6 STAY HAPPY AND HEALTHY

To make sure your holiday isn't ruined by illness, brush up on country-specific travel health information before you go at www.travelturtle.co.uk. The free health tool makes it easy to search for disease and vaccination information for any country, and you can specify the time of year you're travelling for season-specific information. You'll find travel and health information on all major foreign diseases and vaccinations, and even a range of health travel advice for anyone travelling with an existing medical condition.

HAPPY & HEALTHY **Worrying you haven't had the right jabs as your plane is about to take off is as much fun as being ill on holiday**

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FREE WI-FI Use all your handy travel phone apps abroad without paying for the privilege

7 USE YOUR PHONE APPS

Taking your smartphone on holiday gives you instant access to a wealth of travel apps, including city guides, maps and language translation tools, but do watch out – using your phone abroad can mean coming home to a hefty bill. That's why we love the Global Wi-Fi Finder app, which is free from www.jiwire.com. Download it to your phone before you leave and it will find public Wi-Fi networks for you anywhere in the world, and connect your phone automatically for fast, free internet access. It's available for Android and iOS smartphones, and worth using even in the UK if you want to avoid hefty data charges.

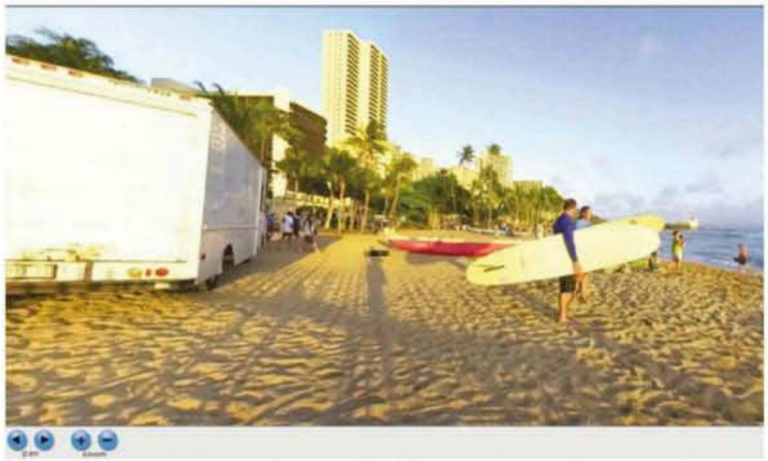
8 KEEP IT ON YOU

When you're making your travel plans, you need Tripit – an app that turns all your flight, hotel and car rental bookings into mobile travel itineraries in seconds. This keeps all your bookings in one place, so you don't have to root through piles of paper to find the document you need. It's so much less stressful! The app is available for Windows Phone 7, Android, Blackberry and iPhone, and you can download it from www.tripit.com.

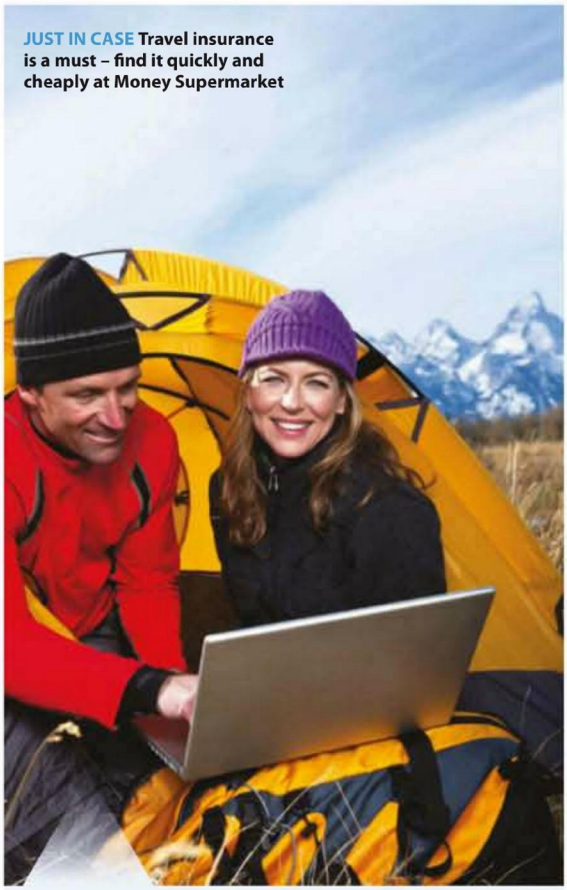
"Tripit keeps all your bookings in one place, so you don't have to root through piles of paper to find what you need"

9 TAKE A GOOD LOOK

If you're torn between a few different destinations, or just curious about what you might see on your holiday, visit www.destination360.com. Type your destination into the search box at the top right of the page and you'll be rewarded with a 360-degree panorama view of the area. You can pan across the scene and zoom in to see what it really looks like – great for those who want a bit more than the 'brochure view'. The website's destination guides are well worth a read too.



PICTURE PERFECT? Get a 360 degree view of your destination before you leave home



JUST IN CASE Travel insurance is a must – find it quickly and cheaply at Money Supermarket

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10 PROTECT YOURSELF

You've invested a lot of time and effort planning the perfect holiday, so make sure nothing ruins it. If your bank doesn't provide free travel insurance or a year-round policy, shop for the best deal at www.moneysupermarket.com. If your bank does provide insurance, you need to let it know you're going away. In case disaster strikes and you lose your luggage and phone, send yourself an email with your plans, passport numbers and so on, so you'll be able to retrieve it all from any computer with a web connection. You can now go away with total peace of mind and have the best holiday ever. ■

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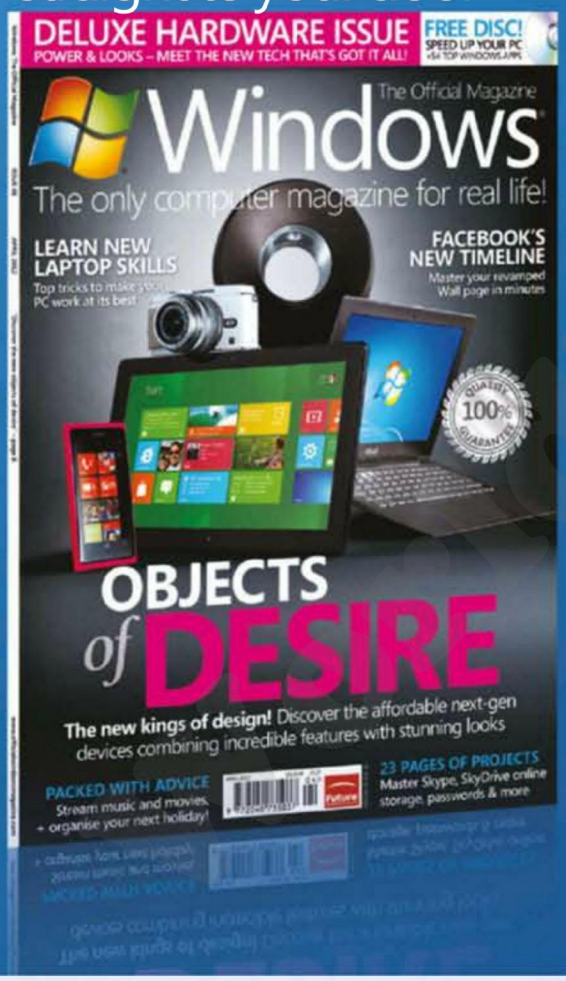
DELUXE HARDWARE ISSUE
POWER & LOOKS – MEET THE NEW TECH THAT'S GOT IT ALL!
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SPEED UP YOUR PC
The Official Magazine
Windows
The only computer magazine for real life!
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Support

WINDOWS HELP ▸ HARDWARE FIXES ▸ SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS ▸ INTERNET TIPS

Do you have a PC problem? Get in touch...

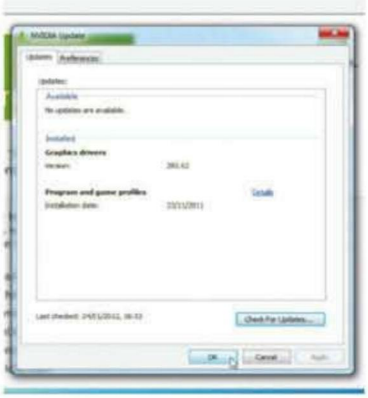
Email full details of your problem to the support team and we'll do our best to help **supportsquad@futurenet.com**

Windows

MEDIA CENTER PROBLEM

Q Since upgrading my self-built computer's graphics card from an Nvidia GeForce 9800GT to a GeForce GTX560, I've been unable to view pictures (picture folders appear empty) or TV (the sound still works) through Windows Media Center. My TV signal is provided by a Hauppauge 9000 series card, and I can watch TV through its own software, while the pictures are visible in Windows itself. Short of a full reinstall, is there anything I can do to fix this problem?

Robert Peters



DRIVER UPDATE Check Nvidia's own website for the very latest drivers for your card

James's solution

When upgrading one graphics card to another, you usually remove the drivers for the old one before installing the new card, but it's easy to forget, particularly if you replace one card with a similar one from the same manufacturer.

In this case, Robert was able to solve his problem by removing the drivers that he'd installed via the ASUS website (version 258.66) and installing the very latest drivers (version 280.26) from Nvidia's own website at http://uk.geforce.com/drivers. Once these new ones were installed, Windows Media Center behaved perfectly once again and he could view both pictures and TV as you'd expect.

Hardware

SCREEN NOT DISPLAYING

Q I have an HP Pavilion p6140f desktop PC with Intel Q8200 processor and 8GB RAM running Windows 7 Ultimate 64-bit. I installed an EVGA 400-series graphics card two months ago and it works beautifully – except when I hook it up to my Vizio 42-inch HD TV via the VGA port.

I've calibrated the display to its recommend resolution, but the display is too wide for the television screen – in other words, the left and right edges of the screen aren't visible. Can you help, please? I can't access any of my shortcuts or the Start menu.

Remie Vicencio

Adam's solution

This problem can be traced to the fact that you're connecting your computer to the television via a VGA cable. While you can normally transfer widescreen signals via VGA, it sounds as though your TV's VGA support may be limited. You could try setting the screen to a lower resolution via your PC to see whether the TV can display a full widescreen picture. Make sure the

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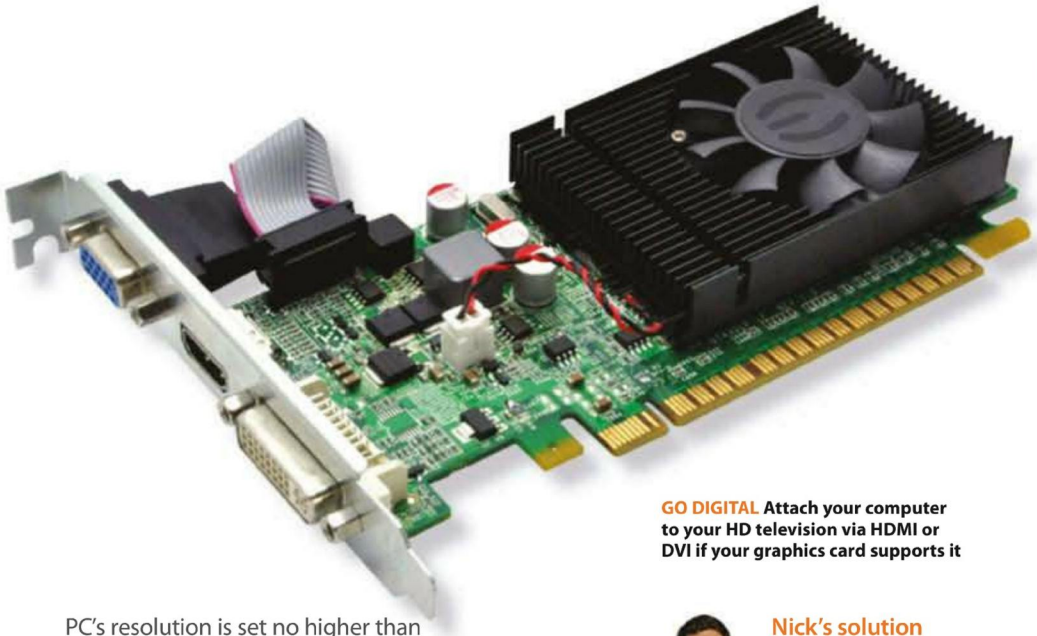
FIND THE SOLUTION! *Nvidia support*
If your PC has Nvidia graphics, bookmark www.nvidia.co.uk/page/support.html for help, advice and driver updates.



GO DIGITAL Attach your computer to your HD television via HDMI or DVI if your graphics card supports it

PC's resolution is set no higher than 1080p (1,920 x 1,080) or 720p (1,280 x 720), depending on your TV's maximum resolution.

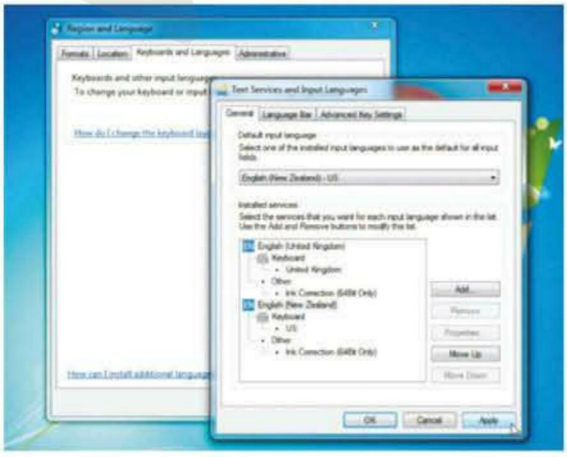
A better option is to use your graphics card's digital output instead – all modern cards offer at least one digital output in the form of a DVI or **HDMI port**. The EVGA 400 series (www.evga.com) offers both ports, so we'd recommend hooking it up to your TV via an HDMI cable. Not only does the HDMI cable carry sound from your computer to the TV, but if your TV is set to automatically adjust its settings (check the Picture or Display settings under Aspect Ratio), it'll automatically scale the picture to fit, too.

Windows

KEYBOARD CONUNDRUM

Q I'm running Windows 7 on my laptop and the @ and " symbols are transposed. How do I get them back to their normal positions? I already have the laptop's keyboard set to UK, so I don't really see where I can go from here.
John Windle

CHANGE LOCATION Your keyboard layout depends on where your laptop was bought



Nick's solution
John's problem stems from the fact that he's based in New Zealand. New Zealand laptops use the US keyboard layout, where the @ symbol is above the [2] key, and the " symbol is above the ['] key. John was able to resolve his problem by going into the Region and Language Control Panel (type **change location** into the Start menu's Search box), switching to the Keyboards and Languages Control Panel, clicking 'Change keyboards' and switching to 'English (New Zealand)', with US keyboard layout. Once set, John's keys functioned correctly.

> "New Zealand laptops use the US keyboard layout, where the @ symbol is above the [2]"

Email

MAIL GLITCHES

Q Recently, Windows Live Mail has started playing up after months of faultless use. I find I can no longer delete email from any of the folders (I get the message "The selected message could not be copied to the folder"), and neither can I add senders to the blocked sender's list – I still get mail from them. Can you advise?
Bruce Mayo

Matt's solution
Bruce actually solved this problem himself – he was using Windows Live Mail to manage his AOL email account, but having changed his password on the AOL website, he'd forgotten to update the password in Windows Live Mail as well. Doing so rectified his problem. When experiencing

Quickfire questions

Why do my emails stay stuck in my outbox, only being sent when I close down Windows Live Mail?
Ray Daniels
Try the following: click the 'Menu' button to the left of the Home ribbon in Windows Live Mail, then select 'Options > Mail'. Switch to the Send tab and make sure that 'Send immediately' is ticked to ensure emails are sent as soon as you finish writing them.

What is the latest advice regarding **ActiveX** filtering? Should I leave it switched on?
Roger Brown
ActiveX filtering provides additional security in Internet Explorer 9, and can be switched off if required when you're visiting a trusted website. We recommend leaving it on at all other times.

Jargon buster!

ActiveX
Mini applications used by websites to deliver additional functionality and content, including video playback.

Drive image
An exact copy of a hard disk or partition that is stored inside a file or group of files for back-up purposes.

HDMI port
A new digital port designed to connect a variety of devices, including HD TVs, computers and Blu-ray players.

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Quickfire questions

How can I force Internet Explorer to open a full-size window instead of having to manually resize it each time?
Mary Bagan
Right-click the Internet Explorer icon on the desktop or Taskbar (Windows 7 users should then right-click 'Internet Explorer' from the Jump list that appears) and choose 'Properties'. Now change the Run drop-down menu so that it reads 'Maximized' and click 'OK'.

Why can't the Windows Backup tool locate my external hard drive, which is connected through my router?
Austin Sandford
Sadly, the Windows Backup tool in Windows 7 Home Premium can't back up to network drives. The simplest solution is to switch to a tool that does recognise network drives, such as Comodo Backup (http://backup.comodo.com), which offers both file and image-based backups for free.

I keep getting the following pop-up message: "A website wants to open web content using this program on your computer." What should I do?
Sal Evans
Check the message to see which program it is referring to – in Sal's case, it was Adobe Flash Player asking for permission, which is safe. If you trust the program, tick the box and click 'Allow' – you won't be bothered by the pop-up message again.

strange behaviour like this, it's always a good idea to follow Bruce's example and verify your settings from the 'Options > Email accounts' dialog box.

Windows

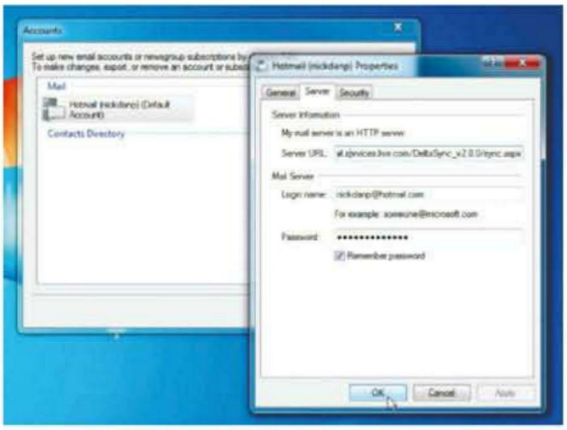
PROBLEM PRODUCT KEY

Q I recently did a clean reinstall of Windows 7 from my Windows 7 Upgrade disc, and encountered no problems, having previously used it once before to upgrade from Windows Vista. However, last week, I attempted to reinstall it again, but it wouldn't accept my **product key**, claiming it was not valid. Is there a limit to the number of times the key can be used?
Mike Marsh

James's solution
No, there's no limit to the number of times the product key can be used on the same computer. However, what Mike had forgotten to mention in his original email was that this latest attempt to reinstall Windows 7 was on a brand new hard drive. When using an upgrade disc to install Windows 7 or Vista, the software looks on the hard drive for the existing version of Windows as a qualifying product. Once it has detected this, it will accept the product key after you have formatted the drive and installed Windows.

In Mike's case, his new hard drive had no existing version of Windows to refer to, so the product key was rejected. The way to get around this is somewhat laborious: you need to install either Windows Vista or Windows 7 first (skipping the part to enter your product key when prompted), then as soon as that's in place, you must reinstall Windows 7 again. This time it detects the copy of Windows that you've just installed, allowing you to format the hard drive to produce a clean install and then enter your product key.

In future, when upgrading your hard drive, consider imaging the contents of your old drive to your back-up drive using a tool such as Macrium Reflect Free (which is on the cover disc). You can then restore that **drive image** to your new drive after it's been fitted using a Macrium recovery disc (which you create in the program when prompted). Not only is imaging quicker than a full reinstall, but it ensures all your programs and settings are restored, too.



VERIFY SETTINGS
Check your email account is set up properly if you experience ongoing issues

UPGRADE REQUIREMENT
Windows 7 needs to see a previous installation before it will accept your upgrade product key

CREATE A SLIDESHOW IN MOVIE MAKER

Q Is there a simple and free alternative to Windows DVD Maker for making photo slideshows on DVD? I want to be able to caption each individual picture.
David Morris

Matt's solution
You'll find Windows Live Movie Maker is the perfect tool for the job, David – the software is on the cover disc (look under 'Resources for Windows Live Essentials'), and this step-by-step guide reveals everything you need to know.

1 Get started

Launch Windows Live Movie Maker and add photos by dragging them into the box marked 'Click here to browse for videos and photos'. Rearrange photos by clicking and dragging them into the desired order.

2 Tweak slideshow settings

By default, each slide is shown for five seconds – select them all by pressing [Ctrl]+[A] and switch to the Edit ribbon to change this via the Duration menu. Change the effect between slides from the Animations ribbon.

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WINDOWS WATCHDOG

One reader worries that personal details may have been passed on, and a switch to Windows 7 causes problems...

COMPANY FastSpring
READER Mr D Brett
NATURE OF COMPLAINT After buying software online, our reader worried about emails from a third-party who had his details.

Adam's solution
Mr Brett bought Windows maintenance tool CleanMyPC, a piece of software distributed by MacPaw. He received an email when he purchased the program, complete with a receipt. A few days later, he was concerned when another email arrived from a company called FastSpring, containing a copy of the receipt. "It looks phoney and includes a link for me to click – which I have ignored," Mr Brett told us. "It includes some personal details, too."

Phishing scams – emails that try to trick you into giving up personal details – are quite common. Mr Brett was right to be wary. But, in this case, there was actually nothing to worry about. We investigated the company and FastSpring is a reputable e-commerce service. Software distributors use it to sell their programs. When Mr Brett paid for his software, FastSpring processed the transaction and the download was made from its servers.

The upshot is there's nothing dodgy to report. The email that set off alarm bells for Mr Brett was, ironically, actually meant to set his mind at ease.

STATUS: CASE CLOSED
Mr Brett wasn't the victim of a scam after all, which is good news for all concerned. However, it pays to be vigilant and Mr Brett's cautious approach to an email from a sender that he didn't recognise is a sensible one.

COMPANY RoboForm
READER Joy Clough
NATURE OF COMPLAINT Joy used RoboForm on her Windows XP-based computer without problem. However, when she switched to the 64-bit version of Windows 7, it no longer worked. We set about investigating.

Nick's solution
You might think at first glance, like we did, that this sounds more like a technical issue. On further investigation, it turns out that several RoboForm customers had been affected by a similar problem. RoboForm remembers your login and other personal details, filling them in automatically for you.

After upgrading, Joy's copy of RoboForm was forgetting the information – a problem that affected other disgruntled users, according to several online forums. It turned out that the program only worked properly in 32-bit mode when combined with Internet Explorer 8 or Internet Explorer 9 – even on 64-bit computers.

Fortunately, there's now a simple solution – update the software. The company has released a new edition that works on the 64-bit version of Windows 7. If you're still using the 32-bit version of Windows 7, RoboForm works just fine anyway.

STATUS: CASE CLOSED
Hopefully, this workaround should have Joy's version of RoboForm back up and automatically filling in online forms. ■

> "Phishing scams – emails that try to trick you into giving up personal details – are common"

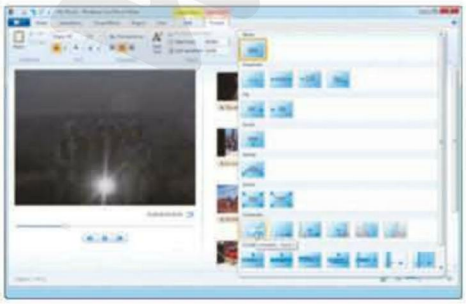
Hero of the month...

TELEPHONE PREFERENCE SERVICE

The Telephone Preference Service – or TPS – is a great way to sort out legitimate callers from dodgy salesmen. Sign up at www.mpsonline.org.uk/tps/ and you get added to an official database. Companies that cold call you are required by law to check their list against this database. Any that continue to call are breaking the law.

CUT COLD CALLS
The TPS is provided by the same people who run the Mailing Preference Service, cutting down on junk mail and cold calls

Feel like you're being ripped off? Let us know...
If you're experiencing problems and want us to help, or want to nominate a Hero of the Month, get in touch by emailing **supportsquad@futurenet.com** with the subject Watchdog



3 Add captions
Some photos may come with captions – double-click one to change it, or click the 'Caption' button on the Home ribbon. Type your caption in the box, and use options on the Format ribbon to change style and look.

4 Burn finished DVD
Click the menu button and choose 'Save project' as you work. Once complete, click the 'Play' button to preview your movie. If you're happy, switch to the Home ribbon, click the 'Save Movie' button and choose 'Burn a DVD'.

Jargon buster!

Product key
A unique combination of letters and numbers that is used to unlock a software program or Windows itself before you can use it. The purpose is to prevent the unlawful copying of software.

VGA port
An older analogue 15-pin port that is used to transmit video signals from a computer to a monitor.

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HOT TOPIC! GET MORE FROM... STREAMING

We answer your queries about streaming digital media around the home

Q WHY DO I NEED TO STREAM INSTEAD OF DOWNLOAD?

Downloading media files such as albums and movies is very useful, but it's not always the best thing to do. There are lots of services that enable you to stream content for free instead of paying for a download – Spotify, for example – and downloading can use more of your broadband allowance than streaming. This can leave you with very little of your monthly allowance if your ISP has a limit on your consumption.

Streaming isn't always about the internet though – you can also use it to get your media from one machine to another without physically transferring the files. For example, you might have a lot of movies on your desktop that you want to watch on a netbook. There's little point in copying them onto the limited space on the netbook if you're only going to watch them once – you're much better off streaming them from your desktop.

Q WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED?

It depends on what you're streaming from and to. For example, you might only need two PCs – say a desktop and laptop. You can then use your internet connection to stream from one PC to the other. More commonly though, you'll want to stream to a television for watching movies, or to an internet-connected stereo for listening to music. You can also stream films to a media centre, which is sometimes built into an HDTV or games console.

Q WHAT DO I HAVE TO CONFIGURE IN WINDOWS?

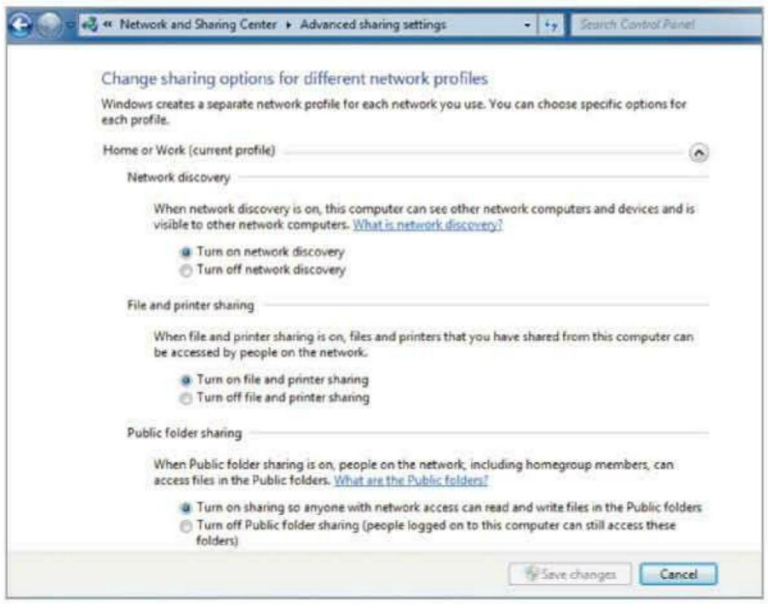
It depends on your version of Windows, but you'll need to make sure that your network is discoverable by a Windows PC that wants to access it, say a Windows laptop trying to stream from a Windows desktop. Make sure 'Network discovery' is enabled in 'Network and Internet > Network and Sharing Centre'. Also make sure media streaming is turned on. You can then select 'Choose media streaming options…' to manage devices individually.

Q WHAT OTHER DEVICES IS IT POSSIBLE TO STREAM TO?

In the mobile age you can stream to your smartphone or tablet too. You can stream from a media center or PC, or from the internet via apps. Android, Windows Phone 7 and iOS all have apps that enable you to stream from popular sites like BBC iPlayer, 4oD, LoveFilm and Netflix.

Q WHAT ABOUT CODECS AND OTHER COMPATIBILITY ISSUES?

On the hardware side, all media streaming devices these days use something called UPnP (Universal


Network and Sharing Center ▸ Advanced sharing settings
Search Control Panel
Change sharing options for different network profiles
Windows creates a separate network profile for each network you use. You can choose specific options for each profile.
Home or Work (current profile)
Network discovery
When network discovery is on, this computer can see other network computers and devices and is visible to other network computers. What is network discovery?
Turn on network discovery
Turn off network discovery
File and printer sharing
When file and printer sharing is on, files and printers that you have shared from this computer can be accessed by people on the network.
Turn on file and printer sharing
Turn off file and printer sharing
Public folder sharing
When Public folder sharing is on, people on the network, including homegroup members, can access files in the Public folders. What are the Public folders?
Turn on sharing so anyone with network access can read and write files in the Public folders
Turn off Public folder sharing (people logged on to this computer can still access these folders)
Save changes
Cancel

SHARING OPTIONS **It's easy to configure Windows so that it can discover your network and enable streaming between your laptop and your desktop**

Q IS THERE ANYTHING TO CONFIGURE IN MY ROUTER?

Possibly, although your router should be set to allow DHCP (Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol) so that newly attached internet devices are automatically assigned an IP address that the router will accept, allowing them to join the network. This is always enabled by default. Some routers also allow you to manage the UPnP settings so that certain ports are always assigned to certain devices or applications. It's best to leave UPnP enabled to ensure streaming will work on a number of devices.

NUMBERS UP **Every device that connects to the web needs a unique IP address. This is automatically assigned by DHCP**

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FIND THE SOLUTION! ***Can I give priority to media streaming?***
Yes, you can set up Quality of Service rules in your router so your streaming isn't interrupted when other people are on the network.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I STILL GET BUFFERING PROBLEMS?

If it's buffering from streaming internet services, there are a number of places to look. You'll need a download speed of at least 2MB to stream video effectively – less for audio. Also consider how your devices are connected. If you're using Wi-Fi, are you able to upgrade to 802.11n to give you the best throughput? If not, are you able to use a wired connection for your devices – perhaps through powerline networking?

POWER BOOST **Powerline networking sends data through the electrical wiring in your home to connect up your PCs**

> "It takes hardly any effort for devices to access your router and be given a network address"

Plug and Play), which is a protocol for internet-connected devices that helps them to find each other on a network. UPnP has revolutionised media streaming because it takes hardly any effort for devices to access your router and be given a network address, which is required for accessing content over that network.

Codecs relate to media players such as Windows Media Player. If you're streaming from an external hard drive to a desktop computer for example, and you experience problems with sound or video, those issues might relate to missing codecs. To find out whether you have the correct codec or download it, follow the instructions included with the Windows Media Player Troubleshooter (accessed through the Help menu).

GET WIRED **Stream over a wired connection to watch on-demand TV in high-def**

WHAT ABOUT MY BROADBAND ALLOWANCE?

If you're streaming from one computer to another (or tablet or smartphone over Wi-Fi) then you are not using any of your download allowance. However, if you're accessing online services like TV catchup or a movie streaming service, you are consuming a lot of **bandwidth**. An hour's iPlayer could well use up 1GB of data. Check with your ISP how much you can use. Some ISPs also have online broadband monitors to check how much you're using.

WHAT HAPPENS IF ONE OF MY DEVICES STILL ISN'T RECOGNISED?

If the device has UPnP and Windows has been configured to allow it, the problem could lie in the adaptor settings. From Control Panel select 'Network and Internet > Network and Sharing Centre > Change adaptor settings', then press the [Alt] key to bring up the menus. Select 'Advanced Menu > Advanced Settings', and change Connection Settings to the required order. You won't know what the correct order should be, but you can experiment with moving LAN and wireless items up and down in the list to see if your network then recognises your streaming device.

WHAT DO I NEED FOR WATCHING iPLAYER IN HD?

Even if you can watch iPlayer in standard definition without problems, streaming in HD mode requires a constant connection of around 4-5MB, otherwise you'll find you get regular buffering issues. It's best to stream over a wired connection if possible.

WHAT ABOUT NETWORK SECURITY ISSUES?

There's little to worry about here. Make sure your Wi-Fi network is secured, and for an extra layer of security add the **MAC** addresses for each streaming device to your router's MAC address filtering list so that only the devices you specify can join your network.

Jargon buster!

Bandwidth
A measure of consumed data from a network provider. It's expressed in megabits per second, but is often mistakenly used to describe the amount of downloadable data from a network.

DHCP
Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol automatically assigns a sequential IP address to new network devices, but you can assign permanent addresses in the router's admin panel.

MAC address
A Media Access Control address is a unique identifying code for a piece of network connected hardware, be it a router, PC, smartphone, powerline plug or network printer. Nearly all routers allow MAC address filtering so that only the devices you trust can gain access.

Quickfire questions

What's the Play To feature?
In Windows 7, the Play To feature allows you to control the media being played on any number of devices, including other Windows 7 machines and Media Center. Open Windows Media Player 12, click the 'Share' tab in the library view and mark the checkbox labelled 'Receive media on your network'. Once you've enabled this feature you can choose which devices will have access to your media files.

So how do you use it?
If you want to play a media file that isn't natively supported by the other device, Play To will convert the file. Once you've located the media you want to play on your Play To-capable device, right-click to bring up the menu and navigate to the 'Play to' menu. From here you should see a second menu listing your Play To devices, which you can now control.

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Upgrade

NEW HARDWARE ▶ LATEST SOFTWARE ▶ ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

Welcome

The Upgrade section might look a little different this month – and that's because it is! We've moved our big test and mini test to the front of the magazine to join in the celebration of our round-up of the best tech to enjoy in 2012. But there's still plenty to keep you occupied here, such as the latest hardware news, the verdict on the recently released HTC Radar – a big-screen Windows Phone 7 handset – and software that could make your computer behave better. We've also got the latest games for you to enjoy while it's still cold outside.

Nick Odantzis Deputy editor
nick.odantzis@futurenet.com

This issue's highlights

98 Hardware news: all the latest tech, gadgets, apps and more
Touchscreen Ultrabooks, inside knowledge of the Intel Atom for smartphones, Q&A

100 We test four of the latest hardware and software releases
HP dm4-3000ea, PC Tools security software, Asus N55S and HTC Radar

108 World of Windows: your guide to Microsoft add-ons
Discover the wide range of extra tools you can add to your Windows computer

112 Play these: three of the best new games reviewed and rated
Saints Row: The Third, Tintin: The Game, Serious Sam 3: BFE

Our review guarantee

We use only acknowledged experts to review products, so you can use our ratings with full confidence to make your buying decision

How we review

One of the key tenets of our review philosophy is that hardware should be compared against like products wherever possible. It is only when you pit the finest products of a certain type against one another – at the same time – that you can really come up with a definitive verdict as to which is the very best in that category. The pace of development in computer hardware means that it is very difficult to compare scores from today with those from, say, six months ago. Magazines and websites that review a new product on its own run the risk of confusing or misleading.

We guarantee to test every piece of hardware rigorously and thoroughly, using only acknowledged experts to establish the worth of a product. We always review from the viewpoint of our readers; the day-to-day practicality and quality of a product is paramount.

Our awards...

Only the very finest products receive our Best On Test Award. These will have excellent marks for quality.

Our Best Value Award is given to products that quite simply represent the best value for your money.

RATING EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Superb ★★★★☆ Very good ★★★☆☆ Good ★★☆☆☆ Disappointing ★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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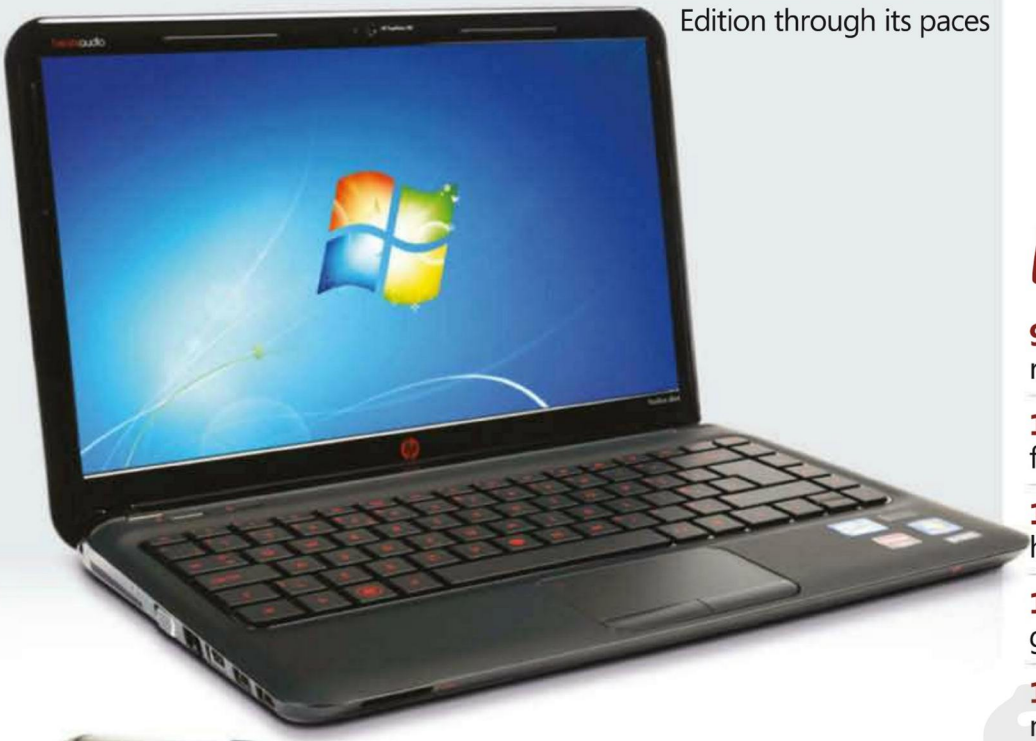
100 We put the HP dm4-300ea Pavillion Beats Edition through its paces



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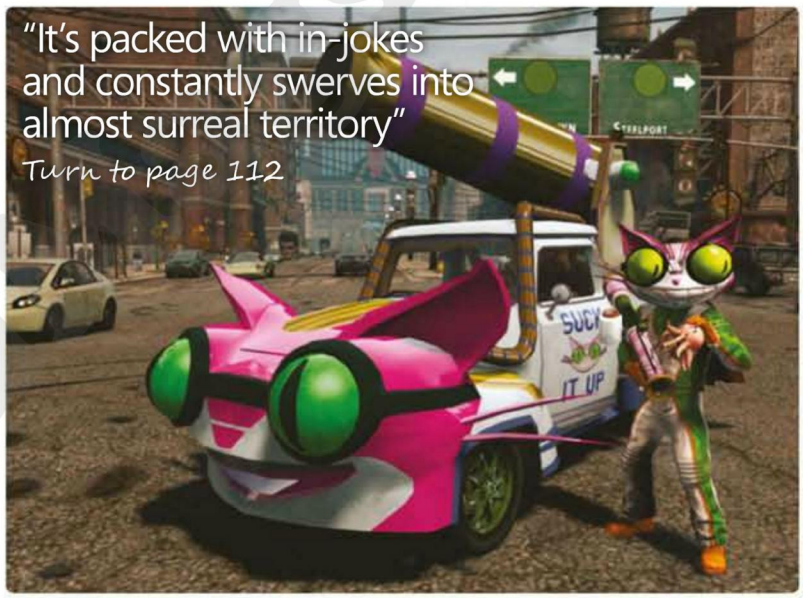
105 How does the Windows Phone HTC Radar shape up?



"It's packed with in-jokes and constantly swerves into almost surreal territory"

Turn to page 112

Our promise to you...

The Upgrade section is your key to finding out about the latest products, all designed to help you get more from your PC

You can trust our reviews

Our expert reviewers are 100 per cent independent, with years of experience in the world of computing. Our rigorous testing procedures mean that only genuine, high-quality products are awarded high star ratings. Further, very few are handed our Best Value or Best on Test Awards. If you see an item of hardware bearing one of these marks, you can be confident that it is an excellent product. Always check when the award was given, to ensure it is still up-to-date.

We choose the best products

Thousands of new products for your computer are released every year and choosing between them can sometimes be an impossible task. Our experts select only the best hardware and software to feature in this magazine, making your decision on which one to choose easier. Even better, our awards and star rating system make it simple to find the best products for your needs, with our recommended products section giving you a fast, trustworthy guide to a wide range of hardware and software.

We'll introduce you to new stuff

Wherever we can, we review new hardware comparatively, pitching it head-to-head against other similar products. (Full details of our policy can be found in the opposite page, under 'Our review guarantee'.) Of course, this isn't always possible with new products and part of our duty to you is to introduce you a wide range of fascinating new hardware, software, services and games.

The reviews of standalone hardware and software are just as thorough as our comparative reviews. However, we do not allocate scores to them because this can often be misleading. The only exception to this rule is on our games reviews, where the pace of change is a lot slower and single scores can be genuinely useful.

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Hardware news...

We reveal all the latest tech, gadgets, apps and more

INTEL UNLEASHES TOUCHSCREEN ULTRABOOKS

Windows 8 to feature in thinner and lighter laptops

Think that touchscreens are restricted to tablets? Intel says think again.

As the company's Mooly Eden revealed at Las Vegas's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) this January, touch is high on Intel's agenda with Windows 8. "In the last 30 years, the number of transistors has gone up one million per cent," said Eden. "But if you look at the user interfaces, we didn't do a lot. We didn't have enough computer power to do what people wanted to do.

"There'd been a lot of experiments, but you didn't have the power [to make] natural user interfaces. We've seen people moving to touch, but for some reason touch skipped the notebook. But it's not going to skip the Ultrabook any more."

It looks like we'll be seeing convertible touch Ultrabooks that run Windows 8 in late 2012 – at CES we saw a prototype with a sliding screen, while another had GPS and gyroscope for gaming.

There was also a demo of the Intel Nikiski concept, which has a transparent trackpad that doubles as a mini-screen so you can preview emails and tweets.

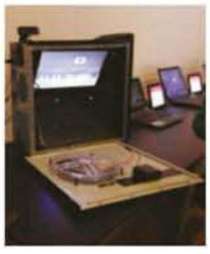
Despite there being over 20 new Ultrabooks launched at the show from the likes of Samsung, LG and Dell, there remains criticism that Ultrabooks are too expensive.

Apparently 75 Ultrabooks are currently in various stages of design, some of which will be touch-capable. Eden hinted that the 15-18mm thickness of many Intel Ultrabooks is "just the beginning".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Nokia beats the recession

Morgan Stanley says Nokia sold 1m Lumia 800s in the last three months of 2011 and predicts 37m Windows Phone handset sales in 2012.



Positive power cuts

AMD has previewed its next-gen Trinity processor for ultraportables – halving the power required compared with current Llano laptop processors.

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INSIDER KNOWLEDGE

James Stables gives the inside story on Intel's new smartphone chip, which promises longer battery life and even more powerful handsets

INTEL ATOM FOR SMARTPHONES

You may know the Intel Atom processor – it has been used in numerous netbooks before. But now Intel has introduced a new version specifically designed for smartphones and tablet. At CES 2012, the chip giant also announced the Lenovo K800 would be the first smartphone featuring the new processor. But it's the tech behind this new handset that's of real interest and could really compete with ARM-based chips over the next few years.

ARM-based chips are used in pretty much all smartphones and tablets from the Apple iPhone and iPad, new Nokia Lumia 800, Asus and Samsung tablets and many more – even though these contain processors with names such as the Apple A5, Nvidia Tegra and Qualcomm Snapdragon, they are all based on the ARM design. Intel wants to compete with this and gain a slice of what has become a very lucrative market.

In addition to the announcement about Lenovo, Motorola will be next to launch handsets based on Intel Atom. The handsets will feature the Atom processor Z2460 platform, formerly known as Medfield. The chip is a single-core and, while this pales in comparison to rivals such as the quad-core Nvidia Tegra 3, Intel hopes that by opting for a more efficient 32nm it can deliver better power efficiencies. Whether this works in practice naturally remains to be seen.

Microsoft lays down its arms

Windows Phone is not competing with other mobile devices on a spec-for-spec basis. Microsoft says the user experience is more important than knock-down prices.

Laptops? Bah! Humbug!

Shipments of laptops were down 1.4 per cent compared to the fourth quarter of 2010. Analyst Gartner says it's partly due to belt-tightening.

Q&A

Q WHAT WILL BE THE NAME OF THE NEXT ANDROID?

A It's a little early to be talking about the next Android – version 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich is only just rolling out – but it looks like it will be Android 5.0 Jelly Bean. Like 4.0, it will be for both tablets as well as smartphones.

Q IS IT TRUE THAT NOKIA HAS SWITCHED TO WINDOWS ON ITS PHONES?

A Nokia is in the process of launching a range of smartphones based on Windows Phone – this isn't like Windows on PCs, it's specially designed for the phone. The Nokia Lumia 800 and Lumia 710 have been announced and are now available in UK stores.

Q ARE ULTRA-BOOKS THE NEW NETBOOKS?

A Netbooks are cheaper and slower laptop PCs for basic tasks. Ultrabooks are at the other end of the scale – pricey and powerful ultraportable PCs.

Q SHOULD MY MOBILE BE QUAD-CORE?

A The short answer is no – most smartphones have perfectly capable single or dual-core processors. Quad-cores will be commonplace in a few more years, however.

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HP dm4-3000ea

£849 www.hp.com/uk

HP's dm4 has been given a redesign and audio makeover

HP's Pavilion range was never going to offer the same 'wow factor' as its premium Envy line and we couldn't pick out its previous dm4 Pavilion in a line-up. But HP's dm4-3000ea Pavilion Beats Edition is far from anonymous.

Thanks to the ubiquity of **Beats Audio** technology – especially its headphones – HP has decided to give its nondescript dm4 Pavilion a chassis overhaul and specs update. That upgrade does bump up the price to £849, so it's not brilliant value for money, but the Beats redesign is a success for various reasons. It looks super-modern without being too cool for school, enjoys a solid feel for a 14-inch multimedia portable and – most importantly – it sounds absolutely fantastic.

Jargon buster

Beats Audio

Beats Audio is a collaboration with hip hop artists and HP engineers to produce superior audio. HP does this using superior sound components and beefier subs in its PC hardware. HP also makes sure the audio components are built in specific places in the laptop to convert the best possible sound quality.

Punching above its weight

Despite its slinky dimensions (338 x 225 x 32 mm), the dm4-3000ea is fairly heavy. A weight of 2kg for such a small chassis is surprising, but every component – including the great backlit keyboard – feels robust and well-made (although it's not the solid mag-alloy chassis that HP puts in its Envy laptops – just serviceable plastic here).

The board marries the same soft red and matte black hues that adorn the case. The Beats logo also sits front and centre, but the font design is so nice it actually works.

It can be hard to type on smaller laptops' keyboards, but the dm4-3000ea Pavilion Beats Edition is the exception to the rule. It felt much better than the first dm4 Pavilion board and has isolated chiclet keys with a solid bounce. HP has also binned the miniature navigation keys, making it fine to use for long periods for multi-tasking and browsing online. Our only bone of contention was the unresponsive touch tech on the trackpad, which is still a novelty.

The 14-inch display is powered by a 1366 x 768 D LED-backlit BrightView screen, which works perfectly well in most brightness conditions. It's not over-glossy and coped admirably with the darker hues of *The Dark Knight*. We also had no problems streaming high-definition video content.

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TEST RESULTS

KEY FEATURES

HP dm4-3000ea

Supplier www.johnlewis.com
Processor Intel Core i5-2450M 2.5 GHz
Memory 4GB
Storage 500GB
Optical drive DVD-RW
Screen size 14-inch
Display resolution 1366 x 768
Graphics card AMD Radeon HD 7470M
Dimensions 338 x 225 x 32 mm
Weight 2kg
USB ports 3
OS Windows 7 Home Premium 64
Standard Warranty 1-year C&R P&L

Clearly, the HP's dm4-3000ea Pavilion Beats Edition won't have any problems performing most multimedia tasks.

HP also gets bonus points for adding one of the better in-built webcams available. Thanks to the TrueVision low-light tech, it managed to pick us out accurately enough in murky lighting.

Under the hood

The rest of the specs under the hood are decent enough to make sure HP's dm4-3000ea Pavilion Beats Edition didn't suffer any staccato playback – even on number-crunching apps.

HP has bundled a 2.5 GHz Intel Core i5-2450M processor, a 500GB SATA hard drive and 4GB of memory with space for two more sticks if you fancy an upgrade. That should be enough oomph to boot the OS from cold in no time at all but, irritatingly, HP has added the usual **bloatware** gubbins to slow everything down. That said, some of the pre-loaded software, such as Norton and Windows Office Starter Edition, is actually useful.

Performance in our lab tests produced steady if unspectacular results, especially when you consider the power available from that Intel Core i5 chip. A score of 5,629 in our processor benchmarks means that it's more than adept at multitasking, but it does seem low when compared with laptops such as the Packard Bell TS11, which achieved better lab tests.

Graphics were equally unspectacular, and we also got a mid-range score of 5,622 in our 3D Mark tests. This is enough for light gaming, thanks to 1GB of dedicated graphics on its AMD Radeon HD 7470M GPU. Just don't expect to get anything out of *Battlefield 3* or *Modern Warfare 3*, though.

The 174-minute battery life using Battery Eater Pro's Readers' Test was pretty good – especially when you consider it has a 6-cell battery.

So, the question remains, how do you get to enjoy audio fidelity on such a small laptop? The simple answer is to bypass the traditionally tinny laptop speakers by plugging in decent headphones. If you're not a fan of headphones, a more permanent solution is to upgrade to superior audio components, including a well-positioned triple bass subwoofer – output has a very clean throw without breaking up at high decibels.

While the Beats audio results are rich on multimedia play and some of the better laptop audio out, you still can't been hooking up a decent set of speakers.

That said, for audio on the go, the dm4-3000ea Pavilion Beats Edition comes highly recommended – and HP even throws in a pair of Dr Dre's Solo headphones. Overall the HP DM4 is a capable portable laptop, for those who want style while they're on the move.

Admittedly, it's not packed with power, and there are lighter machines for the money, but the Beats's credentials give it cool credibility that will attract students and younger people.

Anyone who does invest will be rewarded with a solid performer capable of work and play on the move, but those with demanding needs will want to look at portables backed up by a bit more grunt. ■

Jargon buster

Bloatware
Programs that are pre-installed onto new machines by manufacturers, in order to boost profit. The result tends to be a poor initial performance, as the myriad of programs fight for your attention when your new PC boots.

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The UK's biggest-selling tablet magazine...

...is now on Android

T3 Android Edition

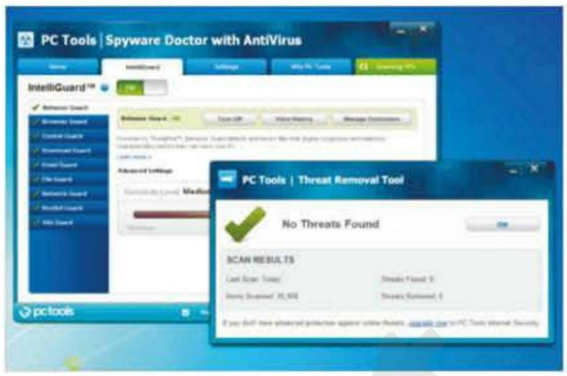
Available to download now

Available in Android Market

WorldMags.net

PC Tools Spyware Doctor with Antivirus

Will this security software help you to stay undisturbed and virus free?



Antivirus protection usually finds itself in an odd quandary – staying too silent means you forget it's there (especially when renewal time rolls round), but being too up-front means you're likely to switch the thing off rather than put up with it.

One of PC Tools's best features is a slider that determines how much you want it to keep you in the loop. On Minimum, only known threats are flagged up. On Maximum, any suspicious activity earns a flag. It's a simple idea and we can't see why it's not offered in all antivirus tools.

Beyond that, this is a very standard program. Scanning speeds are reasonable, though far from the fastest, and it offers the usual range of features: a browser guard to check for dodgy sites (with a focus on online scams), rootkit protection, real-time scanning in addition to the potentially very lengthy full system scans, and cloud based checks on any files downloaded. One friendly extra is the Report Card, which gives you an itemised breakdown of how many infections PC Tools has caught – which would, as ever, benefit from not counting tracking cookies along with genuine infections in the name of scoring positive hits – and a personalised threat rating.

No software firewall is included in this version, although you can upgrade to the higher-level Internet Security tool if you want one. That edition also adds anti-spam protection, assuming you're using a traditional client instead of webmail. Regular email virus scanning for both incoming and outgoing messages is provided in the base version though, and is switched on by default.

While unexceptional, this is a solid package, and one that can be installed and left to its own devices on up to three PCs simultaneously. The ability to configure its feedback according to your own paranoia is a handy one and worth taking a look at if you've had trouble finding the right balance. ■

In security, set-and-forget is what you want

The Official Magazine Windows Verdict

★★★☆☆

Key features

Price £35 (one year, three PCs)
Info www.pctools.com

Key features
Antivirus, spyware searching, cyberscam protection, browser guard, live scanning, customised Report Card

PC Tools Performance Toolkit

Performance, privacy and recovery tools to clean up and squeeze more power out of your PC

Regardless of how much clever technical stuff is going on behind the scenes, it's hard to look at what a tool like this does and not suspect that the biggest improvements it's likely to make are to your perception of your PC rather than the computer itself. Registry cleaning. Registry compacting. Defragmentation. Automatically emptying the Recycle Bin so you don't have to. Shredding files to make the CIA's job a little more difficult if it ever decides to take an interest in your life.

In short, these are the same basic tools offered by every performance booster from the last decade or so, and running them offered little detectable improvement on our battle-scarred Windows 7 test rig. It recommended doing a defrag and cleared both Internet Explorer and Chrome's histories and caches, but did little of note. Do you really need a tool that deletes your temporary folders now that Windows has Disk Cleanup built in? Registry backup in an era of System Restore? Probably not. Time has moved on for computers, but suites like this still feel trapped in the past.

The most useful option is in the Recovery section, where you can search for deleted files by name and type, assuming they haven't been over-written yet. You can also 'bleach' your hard drive, which works like a file shredder aimed at already deleted files. The other tool likely to have a real impact is a list of Windows startup programs that you can disable, though this is a simple list of tick boxes. A dedicated tool such as the free Startup Delayer can give you much more control over this, letting you prioritise the load order and make less important apps wait.

You may find that Performance Toolkit gives you more oomph than it did for us, and there's a free demo if you're interested in finding out. Chances are though, you'll be better off sticking with what Windows and your applications already offer, plus a few extras to deal with individual issues. ■

Four-second startup? Nice, but we're not even close

The Official Magazine Windows Verdict

★★☆☆☆

Key features

Price £40 (one year, three PCs)
Info www.pctools.com

Key features
Registry cleaning/ compacting, undelete, disk defrag, disk checking, history/ privacy control

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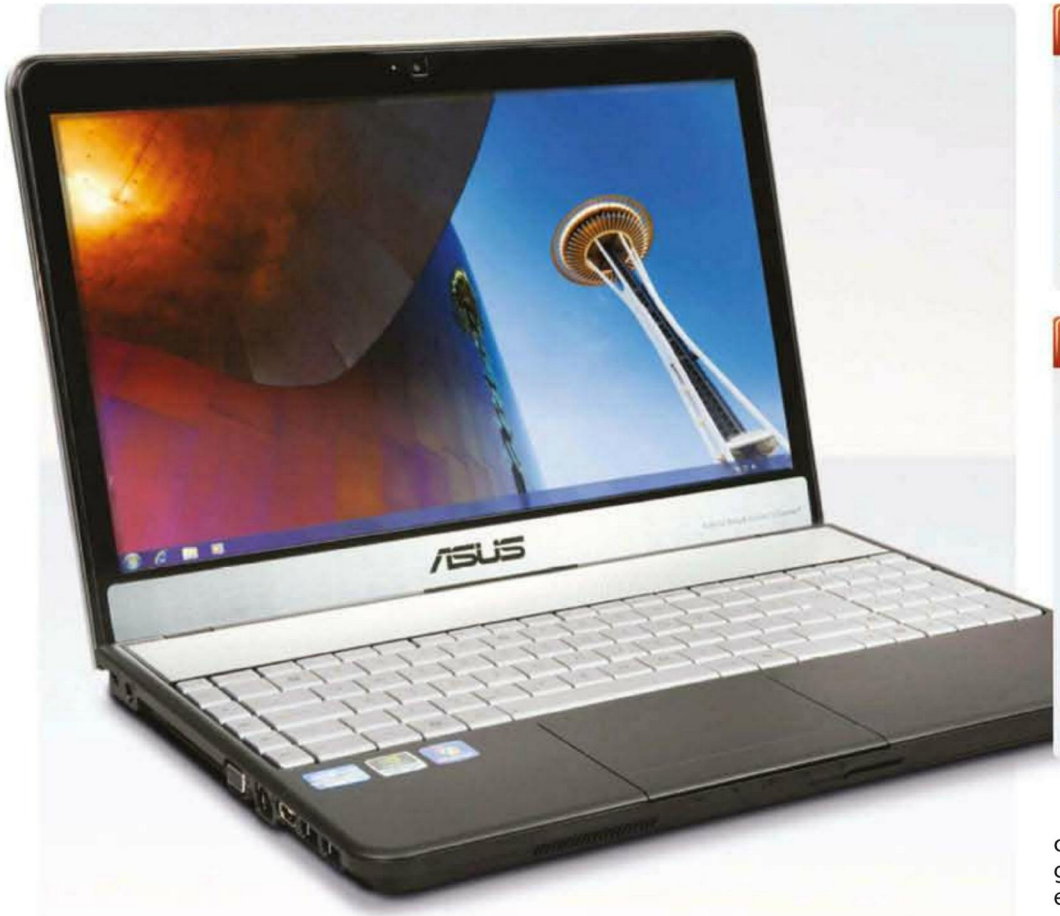


Asus N55S

£700 http://uk.asus.com

A powerful entertainment laptop with some smart styling

This is a high performance laptop with a gaming bent – the Nvidia GeForce GT55M has a whopping 2GB of memory just for graphics, providing some of the best 3D performance you'll find in a laptop.

While the chassis is big, it's not too bulky and is easy to move around. Sadly the power brick isn't so portable and is a bit of a lump. The chassis is a little plasticky, but is topped off by a curved, glossy piano black lid with a smart-looking chrome finish around the edge. It's also strong and well put together.

Key concern

The keys seem a little compressed, and although they have a lovely spring to them when you're typing, it's easy to accidentally hit the wrong one. The trackpad is responsive, but the mouse buttons tend to click too easily and precise tasks such as highlighting text can be difficult.

Sound, which has traditionally been a weakness for laptops, certainly isn't neglected here. The Bang & Olufsen audio is nothing short of astounding. It was too loud for our living room, so we gave it a challenge by bringing it into the office. Even on the other side of our large open plan room, we could clearly make out the music.

It's great for watching Blu-ray movies, and HDMI means you can output your display to a larger screen. If you prefer to use the built-in display, images are clear and crisp, and there's an anti-glare coating to reduce reflections when you're watching video or working. The screen has great contrast and colours are also reproduced well.

Multimedia

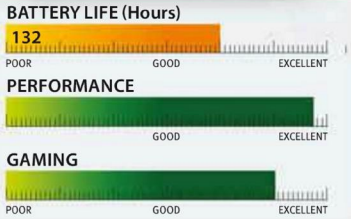
Photo, video and music addicts will be pleased with the 640GB of storage, and USB 3.0 connectivity means that, even if you decide to add external storage, transfer speeds would be extremely snappy with a USB 3.0 drive. Ports are plentiful, while there's an SD card slot underneath the front lip.

Key features

Price £700
Info http://uk.asus.com

Key features
Intel Core i7-2670QM 2.20GHz processor, 6GB RAM, 640GB storage, 4 x Blu-ray/DVD-RW, 15.6-inch screen, 1,600 x 900 screen resolution, Nvidia GT555M 2GB, 379 x 261 x 38mm, 2.8kg, 802.11b/g/n 4 x USB (including 2 x USB 3.0), Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit

TEST RESULTS



KEY FEATURES

Asus N55S

Supplier www.pcworld.co.uk
Processor Intel Core i7-2670QM 2.20GHz
Memory 6GB
Storage 640GB
Optical drive 4 x Blu-ray/DVD-RW
Screen size 15.6-inch
Display resolution 1600x900
Graphics card Nvidia GT555M 2GB
Dimensions 379 x 261 x 38mm
Weight 2.8kg
Wireless LAN 802.11b/g/n
USB ports 4 (including 2 x USB 3.0)
OS Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit
Standard Warranty 2-year RTB

The N55S performed strongly in our benchmarks – the gaming graphics put it right up alongside entertainment-orientated notebooks such as the Toshiba Qosmio X770, as well as high-end gaming laptops like the Alienware M14X and M18X. With the quad-core processor, advanced graphics and 6GB of memory, you'll have no trouble running most games or doing tasks like video editing.

The laptop uses Nvidia's Optimus graphics switching technology, so you get great graphics performance when it's plugged into the mains and decent battery life when it's not. This is reflected in our battery benchmark score, which is great compared to many of its peers – the Toshiba's Qosmio X770 only lasted 44 minutes by contrast.

The N55S is a superb home entertainment laptop with only a couple of weak points. Performance is excellent and the spec sheet as a whole is impressive. Of course, all this doesn't come cheap, but this machine compares favourably to more stylised and costly laptops from the likes of Toshiba and Alienware. We'd definitely recommend it – if you can put up with the strange keyboard. ■

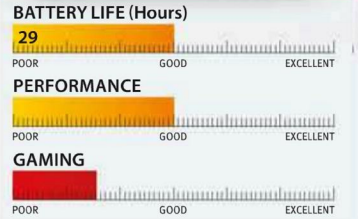
WorldMags.net

HTC Radar

£290 www.htc.com/uk/

A dinky Windows phone for basic users

TEST RESULTS



KEY FEATURES

HTC Radar

Supplier www.amazon.co.uk
Telephone 0800 496 1081
OS Windows Phone 7.5
Processor 1GHz single core
Internal storage 8GB
Expansion None
RAM 512MB
Connectivity 3.5mm jack, micro USB
Camera 5MP
Front camera VGA
Weight 137g
Screen size 3.8-inch
Screen type Capacitive Touch
Screen resolution 480 x 800

The HTC Radar is the latest smartphone to run Windows Phone 7.5, following on from the HTC Titan. With a smooth **unibody** design, high-definition video recording and a 5-megapixel camera, there's a lot stuffed into a compact package.

The HTC Radar, which runs the Windows Phone 7.5 (also known as Mango) operating system is a solid little handset. It's crafted from a single piece of metal and has enough weight (137g) to make it feel sturdy without giving your biceps a workout.

There's no space for a microSD card (Windows Phone doesn't allow for memory expansion) and there's just 8GB of storage – reduced to a mere 6.54GB once the operating system has taken its share. That leaves you with barely enough space for some apps, music and photographs.

The camera is only 5 megapixels but nonetheless produces decent-quality images, making it suitable for those who need occasional camera use.

As if to make up for the lack of megapixels, HTC spouts specs such as a f/2.2 lens and a BSI sensor. This may sound like marketing guff but they do help in the overall picture-taking process, and make the end results worthy of a print.

HTC's form for decent cameras hasn't been forgotten here. Firstly, having a camera button helps. You don't have to fiddle around with gripping the phone a certain way or digging through menus that may be hard to see on a bright day. Wherever in the Windows Phone 7.5 Mango operating system you may be, a long press on the camera button takes you to the camera screen.

Battery life

The HTC Radar ships with a respectable 1520mAh battery. Remember this isn't a dual core smartphone, so for a 1GHz processor and an average-sized screen, this should see you through a day of use comfortably. We took it off a charge at 7am and spent about 20 minutes fiddling with various settings and catching up on Twitter. Over the course of the next few hours, we sent more than 30 emails, a couple of texts and made a 21-minute phone call.

Mid-afternoon, we went running for 90 minutes with the RunKeeper app going, and listened to the FM radio for about half an hour in the early evening. The Radar kept going, and even by 10pm it still had about a third of its battery left. We didn't use it much the following day and it managed to last until lunchtime before conking out.

If it's a straight choice between the HTC Titan and the HTC Radar, then we'd recommend the Radar every time, because it's a much better phone in terms of value for money. However, we can't help feeling that you'd be better to wait for the next crop of handsets or updates before committing yourself to the HTC Radar. After all, two years is a long time to be tied into a contract and Windows Phone is not a new operating system any more, by any stretch of the imagination. ■

Jargon buster

Unibody
The term given to a device which is made out of a single piece of metal or plastic. Unibody design tends to offer a more solid feel.

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Windows The Official Magazine

We recommend...

Shop with confidence; use our recommendations to ensure you always choose the best products for the lowest prices

Instant expert

Buying online

Shopping online can be a lot cheaper and more convenient than buying on the high street.

Precautions

1 Make sure that the site you are buying from is trustworthy. Stick to well-known websites, and if in doubt check out user reviews.

2 When you come to enter your card details, ensure the website address starts with https:// (rather than the normal http://). This means the page is encrypted so no one can read it and steal your data.

3 Always use a credit card for purchases over £100, because the card company is legally obliged to refund your money if you are not satisfied – even if the seller is based overseas.

COMPUTERS

	THE BEST THERE IS...	BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...
LARGE-SCREEN LAPTOPS	**HP ENVY 17** £1,400 ★★★★★ www8.hp.com/uk/en/home.html A luxurious, high-performance creative and entertainment machine. Read more in this issue, page 25	**PB EASYNOTE TS13-HR-035** £300 ★★★★☆ www.packardbell.co.uk Performance is strong, display is vibrant, with excellent networking capabilities. Read more in issue 60
MID-RANGE LAPTOPS	**ACER ASPIRE 5750G** £450 ★★★★★ www.acer.co.uk A great-value entertainment machine with strong performance and mobility. Read more in issue 62	**TOSHIBA SATELLITE C660** £261 ★★★★☆ www.toshiba.co.uk Very impressive feature set for the money, but poor build quality. Read more in issue 58
NETBOOKS	**LENOVO IDEAPAD U160** £389 ★★★★★ www.lenovo.com Large screen and keyboard yet it still remains compact and powerful. Read more in issue 56	**ACER ASPIRE ONE 721** £293 ★★★★☆ www.acer.co.uk Great compromise between laptop and netbook with large screen. Read more in issue 59

PHOTO & VIDEO

	THE BEST THERE IS...	BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...
COMPACT DIGITAL CAMERAS	**OLYMPUS TOUGH TG-810** £190 ★★★★★ www.olympus.co.uk Shockproof, waterproof, plus takes 3D photos and has a GPS locator. Read more in issue 60	**CANON IXUS 130** £150 ★★★★★ www.canon.co.uk 14.1 megapixels, 4x optical zoom, HD movie mode and good price. Read more in issue 53
PHOTO-EDITING SOFTWARE	**ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 9** £53 ★★★★★ www.adobe.com A fantastically powerful suite. Read more in issue 52	**SERIF PHOTOPLUS X4** £10 ★★★★★ www.serif.com Powerful, yet easy-to-use, and capable of fantastic results. Read more in issue 52
EREADERS	**AMAZON KINDLE FREE 3G + WI-FI** £149 ★★★★☆ www.amazon.co.uk The easiest eBook reader to use. Read more in issue 56	**AMAZON KINDLE** £89 ★★★★★ www.jessops.com The nearest we've seen to reading an actual ink and paper book and cheap too. Read more in issue 65
PHOTO PRINTING SERVICES	**PHOTOBOX** Varies ★★★★★ www.photobox.co.uk A range of services, such as calendars and photo books, at good prices. Read more in issue 48	**JESSOPS** Varies ★★★★☆ http://photo.jessops.com A good selection of services, with free delivery to your local store. Read more in issue 48
VIDEO CAMERAS	**PANASONIC HDC TM10** £246 ★★★★★ www.panasonic.co.uk Leading high-definition camcorder, this has it all in one package. Read more in issue 35	**TOSHIBA CAMILEO S20** £78 ★★★★★ www.toshiba.co.uk Great quality pocket camera, packed with features and a total bargain. Read more in issue 50
WEBCAMS	**MICROSOFT LIFECAM STUDIO** £50 ★★★★★ www.microsoft.com Excellent camera capable of fantastic footage. Read more in issue 61	**LOGITECH HD WEBCAM C270** £19 ★★★★☆ www.logitech.com Budget price but far from budget performance. Read more in issue 61

WorldMags.net

OUT & ABOUT

SMARTPHONES

THE BEST THERE IS...

SAMSUNG OMNIA 7
£266 unlocked ★★★★☆
www.samsung.com/uk
A little bit expensive, but the Super AMOLED screen is amazing.
Read more in issue 60

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

LG OPTIMUS 7
£192 unlocked ★★★★☆
www.lg.com/uk
One of the cheapest Windows Phone 7 phones. Great features, quality camera.
Read more in issue 60

MUSIC PLAYERS

THE BEST THERE IS...

APPLE IPOD TOUCH
From £165 ★★★★★
www.apple.com
The undisputed heavyweight champion of the MP3 playing world.
Read more in issue 45

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

SANDISK SANSA FUZE+ 8GB
£47 ★★★★★
www.sandisk.co.uk
Optimum combination of price and functionality.
Read more in issue 62

USB STORAGE STICKS

THE BEST THERE IS...

CORSAIR FLASH VOYAGER GT 16GB
£13 ★★★★★
www.corsair.com
Robust, fast, has USB extension lead.
Read more in issue 55

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

KINGSTON GENERATION 3 16GB DATATRAVELER
£9 ★★★★☆
www.kingston.com
A great budget option.
Read more in issue 55

LAPTOP BAGS

THE BEST THERE IS...

OVERBOARD WATERPROOF MESSENGER BAG
£40 ★★★★☆
www.over-board.co.uk
Dust-proof and waterproof but a little pricey.
Read more in issue 57

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

SPECK TUCKPACK
£22 ★★★★☆
www.speckproducts.com
Stylish satchel for notebooks up to 13 inches; can fit into large bags.
Read more in issue 63

ESSENTIALS

ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE

THE BEST THERE IS...

NORTON INTERNET SECURITY 2011
£20 ★★★★★
www.symantec.co.uk
Covers all the bases in style.
Read more in issue 54

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

MICROSOFT SECURITY ESSENTIALS
Free ★★★★★
www.microsoft.com/security_essentials
Holds its own.
Read more in issue 54

EXTERNAL HARD DRIVES

THE BEST THERE IS...

LACIE 500GB RUGGED MINI
£80 ★★★★★
www.lacie.com
This is the top end of portable drives – robust, fast and supports USB 3.0.
Read more in issue 63

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

SAMSUNG S2
£44 ★★★★★
www.samsung.com
Includes everything you need to back up and store precious data.
Read more in issue 48

MONITORS

THE BEST THERE IS...

SAMSUNG SYNCMASTER F2380
£218 ★★★★☆
www.samsung.com
Impressive build and video quality.
Read more in issue 49

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

BENQ V2410T
£173 ★★★★☆
http://benq.co.uk
Great colour response and really good picture and video quality.
Read more in issue 49

PRINTERS

THE BEST THERE IS...

HP CN503B
£130 ★★★★★
www.hp.com
A cracking printer. The touchscreen makes it nice and straightforward.
Read more in issue 61

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

KODAK ESP C310
£65 ★★★★☆
www.kodak.com
Quick and easy to set up but a let-down when it comes to photo printing.
Read more in issue 61

KEYBOARDS

THE BEST THERE IS...

LOGITECH ILLUMINATED KEYBOARD
£68 ★★★★★
www.logitech.com
A stunning, almost silent, wired keyboard.
Read more in issue 44

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

MICROSOFT WIRELESS DESKTOP 800
£18 ★★★★★
www.microsoft.com
Lovely feel and comes with a mouse.
Read more in issue 58

MICE

THE BEST THERE IS...

MICROSOFT ARC TOUCH
£26 ★★★★☆
www.microsoft.com/hardware
A bend turns it from wafer-thin to fully-functional. Replaces wheel with touch sensor.
Read more in issue 54

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

MICROSOFT WIRELESS MOUSE 5000
£15 ★★★★☆
www.microsoft.com/hardware
Comfortable and perfect for laptops.
Read more in issue 34

HEADSETS FOR INTERNET VIDEO AND VOICE CHAT

THE BEST THERE IS...

LOGITECH WIRELESS GAMING HEADSET G930
£138 ★★★★☆
www.logitech.com
Expensive but wireless and surround sound.
Read more in issue 51

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

PLANTRONICS .AUDIO 655 DSP
£25 ★★★★★
www.plantronics.com
A rich, clear sound, and surprisingly cheap.
Read more in issue 51

HEADPHONES

THE BEST THERE IS...

SHURE SE115
£56 ★★★★★
www.shure.com
Well worth the money if you take your music seriously and have the cash.
Read more in issue 46

BEST VALUE FOR MONEY...

SENNHEISER CX 271
£28 ★★★★☆
www.sennheiser.co.uk
A great little pair of headphones if you don't want to go overboard on price.
Read more in issue 46

Instant expert

The best price

If you type the name of a product into a search engine, it brings up a number of sites selling the item, enabling you to browse through each to find the best price. But there are faster ways to find it...

Find a bargain

1 Price comparison websites such as www.froogle.co.uk and www.kelkoo.co.uk list all the sites and their prices on one page, making it even easier.

2 Another great website is www.hotukdeals.com – it lists some of the best deals online, along with a voucher finder to save even more.

Jargon buster!

Megapixel
Digital images are made up of squares known as pixels. A megapixel is one million pixels. The more pixels, the higher the image resolution, which means you can zoom in more or print larger images.

Super AMOLED
This is Samsung's version of the AMOLED screen technology. This type of screen is good for phones because it's bright, colourful, viewable even in bright sunlight, and extremely thin.

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Windows The Official Magazine

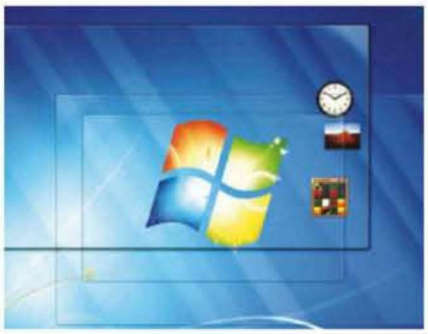
WORLD OF WINDOWS

Free Office, email, video calling and more. You'll be amazed by these Windows add-ons. By James Stables

Having Windows on your computer is only the start of what you can do with your PC. Windows 7 (and, indeed, previous versions of Windows) can easily be enhanced by adding on extra functionality via the internet. These bolt-on features are all official, all from Microsoft, and all guaranteed to make your computer more pleasurable to use.

There is a whole suite of Windows Live apps available from http://explore.live.com, free to use. There's a world-class photo and video editor, mail clients for getting all your messages in one place, and a host of cloud-based services that help you to do more with your PC. Plus online Office apps that look and feel just like the normal Office, security software, online help and much, much more...

Windows



BETTER DESKTOP Windows 7 looks great and is easier to use than any previous version

WINDOWS 7

Windows 7 is the latest version of Windows that ships on most new computers. It delivers better networking, as well as more stable wireless and a whole new desktop experience, which enables you to pin items where you need them and snap windows to parts of the screen. Windows 7 can easily be enhanced with extra online features courtesy of Microsoft.

WINDOWS DESKTOP GADGETS

Windows Gadgets turn your empty desktop space into information-packed zones. Right-click on the desktop and choose 'Gadgets' to pick from clocks, RSS feeds and so on, and go online for train times, magazines and much more.

MICROSOFT ANSWERS

From time to time we all have questions about our computer, and Microsoft Answers (http://answers.microsoft.com) is there to help you get the answers you need. The service enables you to have any uncertainties responded to by real experts, saving you time and giving you a helping hand.

GREAT CHOICE There are loads of themes to choose from, or you can download more

WINDOWS 7 THEMES

The beauty of Windows 7 is how customisable it is, and the new themes mean it's the best-looking version of the operating system so far. Just right-click, select 'Personalize' and click on the online gallery to choose from a range of themes with high-quality wallpapers, screensavers and complementary colours.

WorldMags.net

Online

STUNNING PHOTOS Bing isn't just about search – check out the amazing daily photos

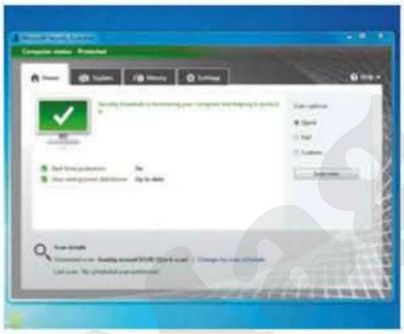
BING

Most search engines help you to find what you want on the web, but Bing from Microsoft helps you to decide what you want to use it for. The search engine is great for narrowing down the results when you're looking for flights, holidays, shopping and other common tasks, and features some amazing pictures at www.bing.com too.

IT'S ALIVE Silverlight brings the internet to life, making websites that use it faster and more interactive

MICROSOFT SILVERLIGHT

Relatively unknown but fiercely powerful, Microsoft Silverlight brings rich animations to websites. Silverlight is the brains behind intelligent websites such as http://video.uk.msn.com, enabling your PC to stream video faster, with less stuttering and more enjoyment. If you haven't installed the Silverlight browser plug-in already, make sure you do soon.



FREE SECURITY Don't fork out for pricey protection, because with Windows, Security Essentials is all you need

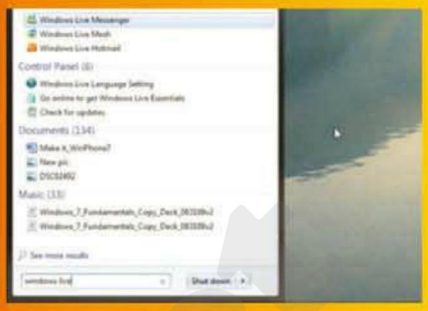
MICROSOFT SECURITY ESSENTIALS

Stop paying for security and use Microsoft Security Essentials instead. This free program is proven to stop as many nasties as paid-for antivirus software. Combined with Windows 7, it's a powerful barrier against viruses. Get it from www.microsoft.com/security_essentials.

FASTER WEB Internet Explorer 9 loads rich web experiences faster than other browsers

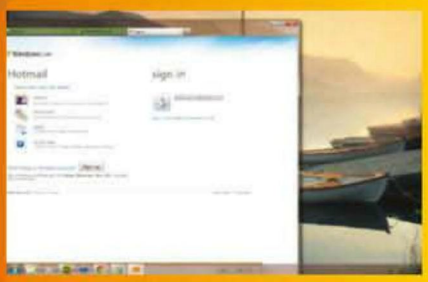
INTERNET EXPLORER 9

Enjoy the internet and get more done by using Internet Explorer 9. Microsoft's latest browser is faster than ever before, supports rich web experiences found in the latest online games, and is a fortress against malware as well. All of these features make Internet Explorer an excellent choice – get it from www.ie9.com.



START SEARCH

Find the things you want fast, by using the Start search feature. To begin searching, just hit the 'Windows' key and start typing the name of a file, a program or even the subject of an email. The results are displayed instantly, with the option to see more results if you wish, enabling you to find whatever you need quickly and easily.



AERO SNAP

Windows 7 makes it easy to deal with your open windows, so that you can work faster and smarter. Simply drag a window to the top to maximise it in a snap, or to either side to have it fill half of the screen. This makes it easy for you to work in two windows at the same time, and you'll wonder how you lived without it.

JUMP LISTS

In Windows 7, the new toolbar enables you to use Jump Lists to gain access to your recent files. Just right-click on the icon for Windows Explorer, Office Word or Internet Explorer to find links to your last opened files. This is a great time-saver, especially if you need quick access to frequently used documents or other everyday items.

WorldMags.net

Windows The Official Magazine

Windows Live

MULTIPLE CALENDARS You can run as many calendars as you like, so you'll never forget a birthday again

WINDOWS LIVE CALENDAR

A great free calendar, which helpfully syncs into Windows Live Mail and Windows Live Hotmail. You can have multiple calendars displayed at a time (for work, home and members of your family, for instance), plus you can set reminders and even have recurring events, so you don't forget important dates next year or even next decade.

IN THE LOOP Windows Live Messenger pulls in info from Twitter, Facebook and MSN

WINDOWS LIVE MESSENGER

One of Windows Live's biggest names, Windows Live Messenger is the most popular messaging service in the world. In 2011, alongside instant messaging, it offers top-quality video calling and games that you can play with your friends, as well as a seamless portal into the social networks of Facebook and Twitter.

MICROSOFT OFFICE 2010

It's still the most powerful Office application in the world, and few can live without Office Word, Excel and PowerPoint. It's now backed up by free Web Apps and Microsoft Office Starter on new PCs, which means that you can open Microsoft Office documents even if you don't have the full paid-for programs.

PROFESSIONAL LOOK You can customise your email, so it looks as slick as it would from a desktop program

WINDOWS LIVE HOTMAIL

One of the biggest webmail services in the world, Windows Live Hotmail sits perfectly alongside other programs such as Windows Live Messenger and Calendar for a seamless experience across the different applications. It also works with Windows Live Mail (see right), meaning that you can have Hotmail on your desktop.

PICTURE PERFECT Photo Gallery offers unrivalled power from a free program

WINDOWS LIVE PHOTO GALLERY

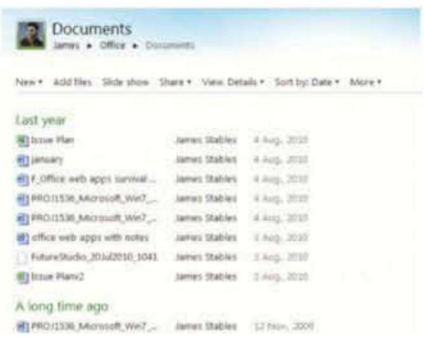
Windows Live Photo Gallery is a powerful picture editor, which enables you to sort, edit and share your snaps quickly and easily. As well as viewing your pictures, you can also improve them by cropping images and removing red-eye using the built-in tools. There's no better way of getting more from your memories.

WINDOWS LIVE MOVIE MAKER

A basic but free video editor, Windows Live Movie Maker offers unrivalled simplicity and speed when it comes to making home movies. You can use the built-in wizard to edit and share movies and memories in just one minute, and then add titles, sounds and effects, and output to YouTube or a DVD in seconds.

WINDOWS LIVE SKYDRIVE

Windows Live SkyDrive is a free service that's the storage behind most of Microsoft's cool free services. If you sign up for a Windows Live account, or are an existing member, then you automatically receive 25GB of free storage for your files, photos and documents, which can be accessed anywhere in the world.



FREE STORAGE Get 25GB for storing your documents and pictures online, and it's free!

WorldMags.net

WINDOWS LIVE WRITER

If you're a blogger, or someone who's always wanted to publish their work online, Windows Live Writer is for you. It syncs with most online blogging services, making it easier to write posts. What's more, you don't have to work in fiddly online systems, meaning that you just need to worry about what to write.

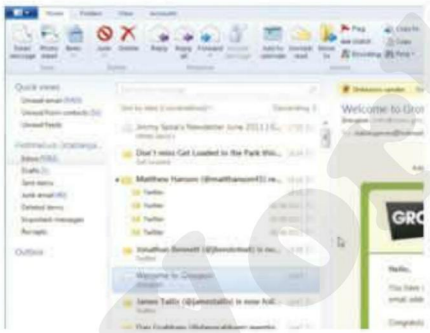
WINDOWS LIVE FAMILY SAFETY

Let your children use the PC with peace of mind using Windows Live Family Safety. It requires you to log in and then monitors accounts, blocks inappropriate content and requires social networking friends to be approved by a parent first. Not a replacement for supervision, but a great tool for parents.

GET IN SYNC Have your documents available on any computer you use by syncing them using Windows Live Mesh

WINDOWS LIVE MESH

Have you ever left a file at home and then found that you urgently need it elsewhere? Windows Live Mesh ends those woes by seamlessly syncing your PCs together, so that your files are available anywhere. Once synced, files appear on other PCs, and the service uses Windows Live SkyDrive, so they're available everywhere.



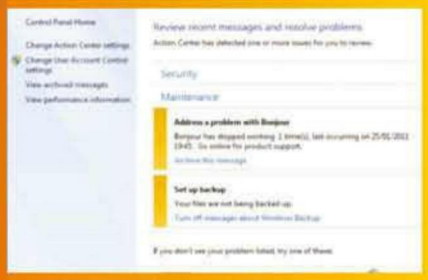
DESKTOP POWER Bring all of your email to your desktop using Windows Live Mail

WINDOWS LIVE MAIL

This nifty program brings mail to your desktop, no matter which provider you use. Windows Live Mail offers everything you need, enabling you to send and receive email from multiple accounts using separate inboxes. You can even use the excellent built-in calendar, and get news delivered to the RSS reader as well.

STAY UP TO DATE

Microsoft often releases updates for Windows and drivers for your PC's hardware, which keep it working at its best. As a result, it's a good idea to keep your system updated. Type **Windows Update** in Start search to check for critical or recommended updates and keep your machine in tip-top condition.



FIND PROBLEMS FAST

In Windows 7, all notifications are located in the Action Center, which is found in the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. Anything that requires attention about your system in terms of security and maintenance, from failed backups to security alerts, is stored here – without bothering you while you work.

GAMES EXPLORER

If you're a gamer, you'll be pleased to know that Windows 7 keeps all of your games in one place, so you don't have to hunt through cryptic menus. Just press 'Start' and choose 'Games' to find all of the built-in Windows titles, such as Chess Titans. When you install your own games, they're added here, too.

Where to get it...

WINDOWS LIVE ESSENTIALS

The apps you use on your desktop to enhance Windows
http://explore.live.com/windows-live-essentials

WINDOWS LIVE

Extra Windows features accessed through the internet
www.live.com

MICROSOFT OFFICE 2010

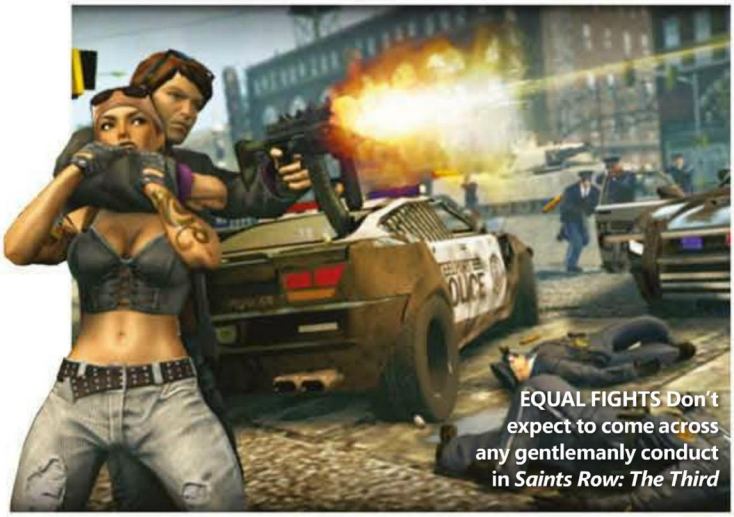
Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote on the web
www.officelive.com

WorldMags.net

Play these...

A trio of new games available to play on your Windows computer

ANYTHING GOES Whatever you imagine, you can do it here – this is quite mild in comparison



EQUAL FIGHTS Don't expect to come across any gentlemanly conduct in *Saints Row: The Third*

WE'VE NO IDEA EITHER You just couldn't make this stuff up, could you?

Saints Row: The Third

The pinnacle of the series and one of the finest free-roamers ever

Price £14.99 **Web** www.saintsrow.com
Age rating 18 **Publisher** THQ
Developer Volition **Multiplayer** Yes
Requires WEI 3.6 **Wants** WEI 4.2

As in previous games, you play as the leader of the Saints, a gang looking to take over the city by crushing anyone in their way. After a bank heist goes wrong, the Saints find themselves in Steelport butting heads with a crime group known as the Syndicate.

From there it's the classic rise to power story as you take out the rival gangs and eventually a paramilitary force. The dialogue is consistently hilarious. It's packed with in-jokes and constantly swerves into almost surreal territory.

Though *SR3*'s weapons start off innocently enough, before long it's UAV drones, hover bikes and 'Cyber' Busters. Usually, the problem with giving the player the best weapons and vehicles in a game immediately is that they won't have anything to look forward to. *SR3* overcomes that issue by setting the bar ever higher in terms of fun, insanity and unpredictability.

Your vehicles can also be upgraded and customised, and best of all the game automatically saves them to your garage, meaning that if you accidentally drop your creation into the ocean, you can get it back.

As in previous *Saints Row* games, performing stunts, killing enemies and generally being a jerk earns you respect which lets you level up, and the perks get more drastic towards the end.

In addition to the endless fun you can have just messing around, *SR3* provides drop in and out co-op in the campaign, and a traditional hoard co-op mode where you fend off waves of enemies.

SR3's only flaw is that the city of Steelport isn't terribly interesting. It's a big industrial town with a few residential areas and lots of big neon lights and skyscrapers.

"As in previous games, performing stunts, killing enemies and generally being a jerk earns you respect, which lets you level up"

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★★★

WEI score

Your PC's Windows Experience Index (WEI) The WEI measures the performance of each component in your PC, and gives you an overall score, so you get an idea of how well games will run on your computer. To find your PC's WEI, type **performance** into Start Search and open Performance Information and Tools. If you're running Windows Vista, click 'Update my score'. If you have Windows 7 installed on your PC, however, you should click 'Re-Run assessment' instead.

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Tintin: The Game

Not a Tintin for the bargain bin

Price £16.95
Web http://tintin-thegame.ubi.com
Age rating 12 **Publisher** Ubisoft
Developer Ubisoft **Multiplayer** Yes
Requires WEI 3.2 **Wants** WEI 4.0

While it suffers from excessively easy gameplay and forced variety, *The Adventures of Tintin* is quite rewarding.

Tintin is at its best in 2D platform mode, although it occasionally gives way to the third dimension and sometimes you'll take part in dogfights, or careen down desert canyons. These parts thrive more on tedium than challenge.

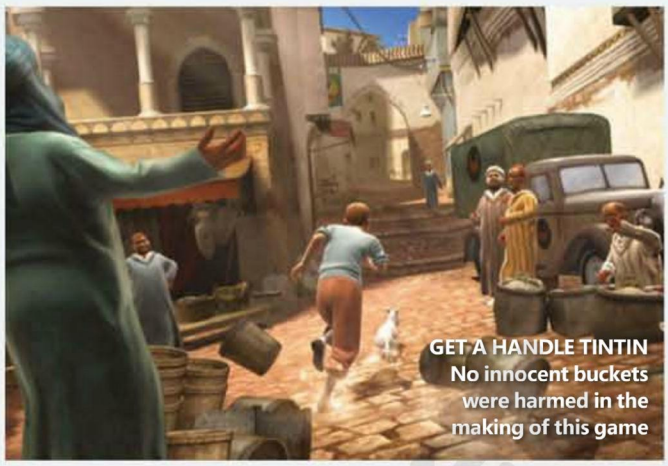
But no other aspect of the game seems quite as clunky as the on-rails sword-fighting, which starts promisingly, but quickly devolves into flailing about in the hope the pointy end sticks in something.

Better than the movie mode, however, is the cooperative mode, which takes you on a trip through Captain Haddock's dreams after Thompson and Thompson inadvertently knock him out. Here, the bosses are better, the level designs more ingenious, and the surreal imagery provides a welcome break.

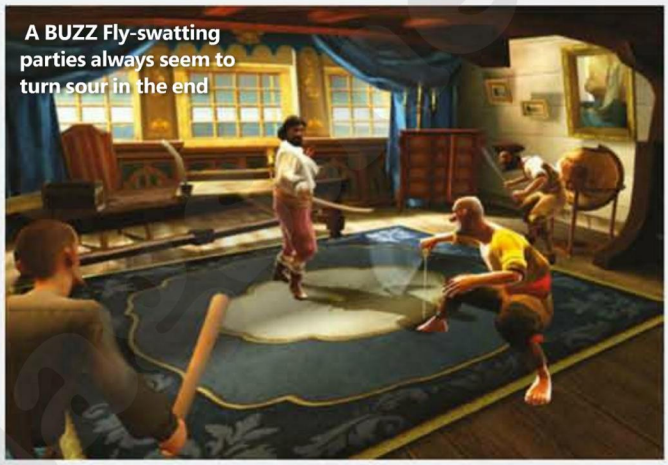
An even better feature is that you can unlock different characters with varying abilities. Tintin, for instance, sports a grappling hook that was absent from the platforming parts of the story.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★☆☆



GET A HANDLE TINTIN No innocent buckets were harmed in the making of this game



A BUZZ Fly-swatting parties always seem to turn sour in the end

Serious Sam 3: BFE

No cover. All man

Price £19.95
Web www.serioussam.com
Age rating 18 **Publisher** Devolver Digital
Developer Croteam **Multiplayer** Yes
Requires WEI 3.8 **Wants** WEI 4.2

So reads *Serious Sam 3: BFE*'s macho tagline. Those other shooters you've been playing? The ones that let you hide behind things? You were playing a coward.

As with the previous games, this is an FPS that prides itself on bedlam and ultraviolent, large-scale carnage versus tens of thousands of screaming monsters. It's defiantly old-school in tone.

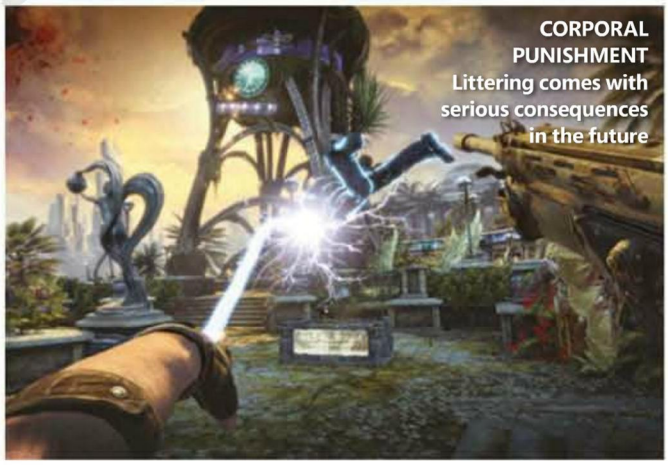
The weapons are large and numerous, while enemies spawn in their droves – from cyclopic fanged gorillas and skeletal chain-chucking horses to giant scorpions with miniguns for arms.

Each kind of enemy has its distinct movement and attack patterns, its own audio cues and weaknesses, and it's in prioritising the most dangerous that the challenge lies. The campaign is playable in anything up to 16 player co-op, and although enemies are adjusted to match, things are decidedly more relaxed when played this way.

There are a few moments of beautiful design: the occasional placement of a surprise onslaught of soldiers and the triggering of a shrewd mousetrap. There's scant beauty in the visuals though.

Windows The Official Magazine Verdict

★★★☆☆



CORPORAL PUNISHMENT Littering comes with serious consequences in the future

INDISCRIMINATE This poor guy just wanted directions to the nearest post office

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Your disc

FULL PRODUCTS ▶ HANDPICKED TOOLKITS ▶ ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

Welcome

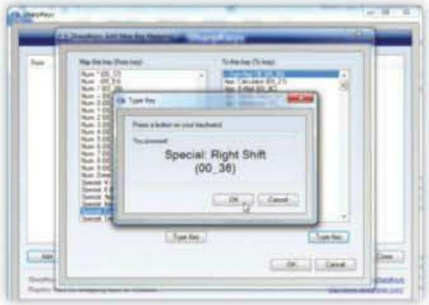
Hello and welcome to your free disc, exclusive to *Windows: The Official Magazine.* This month's packed CD-ROM features great full products, toolkits to help you get the best from your computer, and essential resources for every Windows user.

If you want to make your files and passwords more secure, our Encryption toolkit is perfect for giving you peace of mind. Plus, get more from your PC with our Productivity toolkit and enjoy our usual selection of essential resources.

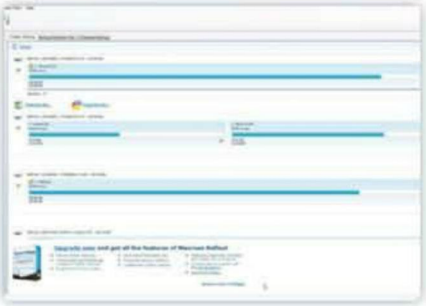
Simon Arblaster Disc editor
simon.arblaster@futurenet.com

This issue's highlights

62 Keep your PC threat-free with Personal Software Inspector



85 Change how your keyboard functions using SharpKeys



92 Back up your disk contents using Macrium Reflect Free

Plus! Enhance your computer with Windows Live Essentials

Step-by-step | How to use your free disc

AutoPlay
DVD RW Drive (D:) OWV_59
Always do this for software and games:
Install or run program from your media
Run OWV.exe
Publisher not specified
General options
Open folder to view files
using Windows Explorer
View more AutoPlay options in Control Panel

1 Get started

Place your free disc into your computer's disc drive. The AutoPlay prompt should appear on your screen and once this has happened, click **Run OWV.exe** to start up the disc interface. A new window appears, telling you some important information. Read it, then click on **I agree** to continue.

2 Browse the categories

Click on one of the categories in the menu underneath the magazine logo to discover all the programs that are contained in each. Simply click on an app's name to find out more about it. Full commercial products usually have information about how to register. To try out an app, just click the **Install Now** button.

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FIND THE SOLUTION! ***How to get your disc to play***
If the disc doesn't start automatically, hit the ***Windows*** *key, then click* ***Computer****. Now double click the DVD drive to get going.*

ALL SOFTWARE SAFETY CHECKED BY OUR PC EXPERTS
SPEED UP WINDOWS
54 ESSENTIAL WINDOWS APPS
Handpicked apps that will power up your PC today
Give your computer an instant boost!
Plus utility packs for better productivity & encryption
Free with issue 68 of...
Windows The Official Magazine
WAVEPAD SOUND EDITOR
90-day trial Record and edit music, voice and other audio recordings with this fully featured software

MISSING YOUR DISC? PLEASE CONTACT YOUR RETAILER

3 Install the program

When you begin to install your chosen applications, the disc brings up another message window to take you through the installation process. Each one of these is different – just follow the prompts until you get a message telling you that the installation is complete. Now it's time to try out your free apps – have fun!

If you have a problem...

Please visit www.futurenet.com/support. To contact our reader support team, email support@futurenet.com or call 01225 822743, quoting the magazine name and issue. We are only able to provide help with this disc, not the software contained on it.

Full disc contents

ENCRYPTION
- AxCrypt
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- Eraser
- gbp4usb
- Hotspot Shield
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- LastPass
- My Lockbox
- PixelCryptor
- Rohos Mini Drive

PRODUCTIVITY
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- DVD Collector
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- GreenCloud Printer
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- KeepNote
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